

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS
TO THE
BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS

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EDITED BY
CHARLES C OSBORNE

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL
INTRODUCTION

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FOREWORD

ON the 17th of May, 1922, a box containing upwards of six hundred letters from Charles Dickens to Miss Burdett-Coutts, afterwards the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, was sold by Messrs Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge of New Bond Street, London. The collection as a whole was purchased by Mr O R Barrett, of the United States.

During the years 1887-1898, when I had the honour of being the private Secretary of Lady Burdett-Coutts, I made, with her full knowledge and special permission, extracts from some of the letters. It is now a source of the deepest regret that I did not copy all of them.

In making the extracts every care was taken to follow the spelling, punctuation, and use of capitals in the originals. It will be seen that Dickens almost invariably used a capital when he wished to emphasize a particular word. He rarely used italics, and the only departures in the following pages from the original letters is the printing in italics of the titles of books and of other publications, and of the dates in words at the beginning of each letter.

The following selections made from the ex-

FOREWORD

tracts are published by the permission of Sir Henry Fielding Dickens, K C., Common Serjeant to the City of London, by whom copyright is reserved in the United States of America, and all other countries. A number of the Letters included in this volume were printed during 1931 in the *Coventry Magazine*

CHARLES C OSBORNE.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS

MISS ANGELA GEORGINA BURDETT-COUTTS, to whom Charles Dickens wrote the following and very many other letters, was the youngest daughter of Sir Francis Burdett, fifth Baronet, and of his wife Sophia, third and youngest daughter of Thomas Coutts. She was born 21st April, 1812, and in 1837 assumed the additional surname of Coutts upon inheriting, through the Duchess of St. Albans, the great fortune of her maternal grandfather, Thomas Coutts. Mr. Coutts, who was the founder of the famous banking house of Messrs Coutts & Co., had married as his second wife the actress Harriot Mellon, to whom, on his death in 1822, he left his entire fortune, including his interest in the bank. Five years later Mrs Coutts married the ninth Duke of St. Albans.

About 1823 Miss Hannah Meredith was chosen as the governess for Angela Burdett, and remained her lifelong companion and friend. From her earliest childhood the daughter of Sir Francis and Lady Burdett was brought up amidst the most advantageous surroundings. Her father, in addition to being one of the most

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eminent politicians and reformers of his day, was the friend of many of the leading public men, writers and artists of the time, including Byron, Samuel Rogers, Thomas Moore, Wordsworth, Sir Thomas Lawrence and Charles Dickens. Under the inspiring influence of Miss Meredith, Angela Burdett became an exceptionally well-educated and accomplished woman. she travelled widely, both in England and on the Continent, and learned to speak and write French and Italian with accuracy and grace. The romantic circumstances under which she acquired her wealth naturally added to the public interest in the young heiress, and led to many exaggerated accounts of her fortune, which, though a great one in the first half of last century, was much less than many fortunes possessed in the twentieth century.

Though Miss Burdett-Coutts went freely into Society, entertained magnificently, and became the friend of many of the most interesting men and women of her day, her chief interests were neither social nor political. From the first she set herself steadily to study in what way she could best improve and aid her fellow beings without any special regard to creed or nationality, though, of course, her chief efforts were on behalf of English speaking peoples. There is no complete record, nor can one ever be made, of her beneficent efforts, for in addition to the many public works she undertook, her private benefactions were multitudinous. Upon some of them light is thrown by the letters from Dickens. She rarely

gave assistance without careful but considerate inquiries as to the genuineness of an application, and the means best calculated to enable those in need to help themselves, and to become again self-reliant and independent. Almost to the end of her life she endeavoured to open and read every letter sent to her, and how much this meant can be judged from the statement that, not infrequently, three or four hundred letters were received in a day.

To compile a mere catalogue of the works initiated or aided by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts would fill several pages, but in order to be able to form a just opinion of her character it is necessary to summarize some of the chief objects to which she devoted her time and wealth.

Writing in 1869, William Howitt said, "I suppose no other woman under the rank of a Queen ever did so much for the Established Church." It is doubtful whether any Queen, out of her own resources, ever did anything like as much. The Baroness founded and endowed the Colonial Bishoprics of Cape Town, Adelaide and British Columbia. She built and endowed St. Stephen's Church, Westminster, and also St. Stephen's Church in one of the poorest districts of Carlsle. The London churches of St. John's, Limehouse, St. James', Hatcham, and St. John's, Deptford, were largely built through her benefactions, and about the same time she placed £15,000 in the hands of Dr. Blomfield, the then Bishop of London, for the work of church extension. She contributed munificently

to the interesting restoration of Ramsbury Abbey, once a Cathedral Church, and was the generous supporter of many other church works, including the Missionary works of Robert Moffat and of David Livingstone

To the cause of Education she rendered greater services, directly and indirectly, than have ever been recognized. She founded and endowed two scholarships at Oxford University. In the cause of elementary education she was a pioneer. The schools for boys, girls and infants adjoining St. Stephen's Church, Westminster, were opened in 1848, and in 1876 the Chauncey Hare Townshend Free Schools in Rochester Street—schools which under the altered conditions of education have since been amalgamated. Through her efforts at Whitelands Training College, Chelsea, the Baroness prepared the way for the modern teaching of domestic science. At this centre year after year she encouraged the teaching of cooking, dressmaking, millinery, housework, house management, thrift, and by her annual addresses, and the offer of prizes for essays, inculcated the ideal that "to whatever class a person may belong, an industrious discharge of the duties of that position in life is a social and religious obligation." In the East End of London an Evening School for boys was carried on for many years at Coopers Gardens, and when free Night Schools were established at the public cost this institution was turned into a Gymnasium and a free Reading Room. In another part of the East End a Savings School was opened and

eventually became a Shirt and Clothing Factory. In the work of the Ragged School Union, the Shoeblack Brigades, and of the Training Ships *Chichester*, *Arethusa* and *Goliath*, the Baroness took a warm and active interest, giving £5,000 to the last-named. She built and equipped the Westminster Technical Institute, which, after doing valuable work, was presented as a free gift to the London County Council. As President for many years of the Destitute Children's Dinner Society the Baroness was able to assist in providing tens of thousands of children with hot and nourishing meals at a charge of one penny, and this work was done before the days of providing hungry school children with meals at the public expense. She was for many years a generous supporter of the organization founded by the Rev Benjamin Waugh and now known as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Indeed, the interest of the Baroness in the welfare and protection of young children extended over a long period of her life, and was carried out in very many ways. She was also the founder of the first home for Girl Art Students opened in London, and extended generous support to the Birkbeck Literary and Scientific Institute. Nor were her efforts confined to narrow limits. She did much to help forward the work of Sir Richard Owen, Sir Joseph Hooker, Frank Buckland, Charles Babbage, and William Pengelly, whose geological collection she purchased and presented to the Nation.

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Through the interest of Charles Dickens, the Baroness was led to erect Columbia Square affording accommodation for about 1,000 persons, a pioneer effort in providing attractive and sanitary accommodation for the poorer-class workers of London. These dwellings were opened in 1862, and two years later she embarked on the much greater undertaking of Columbia Market, built with the object of supplying a large section of London with cheaper and better fish and vegetables. Owing to the organized trade opposition this great scheme was not successful, but the noble building remains as an evidence of the public spirit and munificence of the lady who erected it.

The active interest of the Baroness in the work of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals extended over a long period, and she was one of those chiefly concerned in instituting the scheme under which thousands of children yearly competed for prizes given for essays on the kind treatment of animals, and she never missed an opportunity, when able, of speaking to the vast audiences of children at the Crystal Palace. She provided yearly prizes for the kind treatment and good condition of donkeys owned by the costermongers of London in whose welfare she took a warm interest. Fountains and drinking-troughs were provided in London and other centres. The Baroness was President of the British Goat Society, and did much to encourage British Bee-keeping. The list of her activities is indeed innumerable, but mention must also

be made of the assistance she gave to emigration, in 1863 she aided many of the unfortunate East End weavers of London to emigrate to Queensland and to Nova Scotia, and in 1869 she enabled 1,200 weavers of Girvan in Ayrshire to emigrate to Australia. Sir James Brooke received valuable assistance in founding the Kingdom of Sarawak in Borneo. cotton-growing was encouraged in Nigeria. lifeboats were provided for the coast of Brittany and the fund for the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem received generous support. In 1877 she raised the Turkish Compassionate Fund for the relief of the peasantry in Roumelia and Bulgaria who had fled before the advancing Russian Army.

In recognition of the great service the Baroness had rendered his people, the Sultan in 1878 conferred upon her the Diamond Star and First Class of the Order of Madjidie, which had been given to no other woman save Queen Victoria, and the Sultan afterwards added the Grand Cross and Cordon of the Chafakat (Mercy).

For nearly half a century she did much to relieve distress in Ireland and to revive and extend Irish fisheries. Modern fishing-boats were provided, a training school for 400 boys established, and many other works undertaken to safeguard against famine. In 1880 she offered to advance the English Government £250,000 for the supply of seed potatoes for Ireland—an offer which stimulated the Government to discharge its own responsibilities.

It is not surprising that these efforts on behalf

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of the welfare of her fellow beings brought the Baroness a fame second only to that of Queen Victoria. It is recorded that King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, expressed the opinion that the Baroness was the most remarkable woman in the Kingdom, after his Mother. It is no exaggeration to assert that she was as widely beloved as the great Queen herself. Those who witnessed the extraordinary demonstrations of affection and enthusiasm which took place outside of 1, Stratton Street on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee in 1887, and of her Diamond Jubilee in 1897, beginning, as they did, early in the evening and being carried on by continuous moving crowds until after two o'clock the next morning, were enabled to form some idea of the feelings entertained by the mass of the people for Lady Burdett-Coutts. Mr. Julian Young describes a similar demonstration of feeling during the Reform Procession in 1868. In 1871 she was created a Baroness by the Queen, the only instance at that time of a Peerage being bestowed upon a woman in recognition of her public achievements and her burial in Westminster Abbey is the only instance in English History of the inclusion within the National Valhalla of a woman solely in recognition of her personal character and public works. Many other distinctions were given to her during her lifetime. She received the Freedom of the Cities of London, Manchester, and Edinburgh, and had the Freedom conferred upon her of the 'Turners' Company, the Cloth Workers', the

Haberdashers' and the Coach Makers' H.R.H. Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, in a preface which she contributed to a short biography of Lady Burdett-Coutts, issued in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, said "Great as have been the intrinsic benefits that the Baroness has conferred on others, the most signal of all has been the power of example—an incalculable quantity, which no record of events can measure She has ever sought, also, to increase the usefulness of women in their homes, to extend their opportunities of self-improvement, and to deepen the sources of influence which they derive from moral worth and Christian life "

Lady Burdett-Coutts's circle of friends was an extraordinarily wide one, it is only possible to name a few Among those with whom she was most intimate were Queen Victoria, the Duke of Cambridge, his sister the Duchess of Teck, her daughter, now Queen Mary, the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Faraday, Wheatstone, William Pengelly, Babbage, Rajah Sir James Brooke, Sir Henry Stanley, General Gordon, Sir Henry Irving, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Keppel, Mr Frederick Greenwood, Sir Francis de Winton, whilst her acquaintances included all the best known men and women of the day, foreign Ambassadors, and particularly the Ambassadors and other distinguished visitors from the United States.

In 1881 the Baroness married Mr William Ashmead Bartlett who, though of English de-

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scent, was by nationality an American Under the Will of the Duchess of St. Albans it was provided that if Miss Angela Burdett should marry a foreigner her interest in the banking house was to pass to her sister Clara A compromise was arranged between the two sisters under which the Baroness kept two-fifths of the income for her life, the other three-fifths going to her sister Clara, who had become Mrs Money, and her representatives Mrs Money accordingly assumed the name, in accordance with the Will of the Duchess, of Money-Coutts which elicited the following epigram from *Punch*

Money takes the name of Coutts,
Superfluous and funny,
For everyone considers Coutts
Synonymous with Money

From early associations and training Lady Burdett-Coutts was in sympathy with the Evangelical party, and during the first forty years of her life might perhaps have been accurately described as an Evangelical But she disliked the narrowness of parties within the Church, and had no wish to be labelled as belonging to any particular one The terms of her Will show that there can be no mistake with regard to her own point of view, or to the constancy with which it was held¹ But so long as any movement within the Church was upon lines of loyalty to the Establishment, she was ready to further it by all means in her power She gave as freely and

¹ See page 105

as generously to works of Church extension, and of Church restoration promoted by High Churchmen and Broad Churchmen, as to similar efforts made by Evangelicals. In considering appeals for the relief of suffering she made no distinction, no matter from whom they came. The Church never had a more staunch or devoted daughter, but her adherence was given to the Church as a whole and not to a section of it. She valued the comprehensiveness of the Church of England, and for this reason attached the greatest importance to the connection between Church and State. She believed that State control was the best guarantee for the maintenance of the Church of England upon that broad basis on which it had been re-established in the sixteenth century. She was fully alive to the importance of the Church as a spiritual body, but she knew that spiritual bodies are apt to undergo surprising transformations in the hands of ecclesiastics. The English Establishment might not be ideal, but she valued it because its teaching is based upon the Bible. She had a profound belief in the ingrained Protestantism of the English people, in their attachment to the simple truths of Scripture as opposed to ecclesiastical dogmas, and priestly innovations, and she looked to the people rather than to the Bishops and Clergy to preserve the Church as a priceless heritage. She shrank from religious controversy in any form, as unprofitable, and as tending to accentuate differences, which it should be the first object of Christians to overcome. Nor did the resolution

with which she held to her own views narrow her sympathy or blind her to the good being done by those with whom she could not agree. The object of her life was to promote the spiritual and material well-being of her fellow men. As a staunch churchwoman, her influence in spiritual matters was mainly connected with the Church of England, but she was always ready to co-operate in good works with Roman Catholics, Nonconformists, Quakers, and Jews, and to give liberally to schemes promoted by them. Nothing was more remarkable than this liberality of thought and generosity of sympathy combined with firm adherence to her own views.

Serenity of disposition, sanity of judgment, determination of purpose, breadth of sympathy, and confident assurance in the Christian faith, were the dominant characteristics of Lady Burdett-Coutts. With these, innumerable individual characteristics and foibles were harmoniously blended in that remarkable personality. It has been said that imperturbability is an evidence of full development, "a blessing to the possessor, a comfort to all who come in contact with him." This was true of Lady Burdett-Coutts. Her serenity was infectious. Those who came in contact with her caught something of her wise and brave spirit, and went from her presence better and more hopeful than when they entered. This equanimity was the result of knowledge and experience. It was not due to callousness, for she was highly sensitive, and never regarded with composure the misfortunes

of others. But her nerves and feelings were under the control of a well balanced mind, so that she saw things in a right perspective and proportion. Her justness of perception and sanity of judgment were evidence of "wisdom which is pure, peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and good fruits" She had no wish to escape from the cares, anxieties and responsibilities of life. But she did not allow cares to depress, or anxieties to harass her, or to dim her clearness of vision.

She lived in the present and for the present, discharging the duty of each day, recognizing that the past alone is enduring, that the future is not ours to command; but that to-day, if man will work, he may help those about him, and those who come after him, and add a page to the records of usefulness.

To her wealth was not a proof of merit, nor poverty a reproach in the individual. She valued men and women neither for birth nor fortune, but for what they were themselves. Nobility of character, earnestness of purpose, and capacity, were what she valued most, and she knew that of these the members of no class and of no creed have a monopoly.

The aristocratic influences of a long line of descent were concentrated in her, grace of person, grace of speech, exquisite daintiness and refinement, a delicate perception of distinction, perfect ease of manner, the faculty of winning obedience without effort, and the gift of erecting impassable yet imperceptible barriers against familiarity.

She inherited some of the salient features of her maternal grandfather, Thomas Coutts. In matters of business she was shrewd and far-sighted. She had strong sympathies with commercial life, and a keen insight into the sources of commercial success. She was the first in the Banking House of which she was a partner to perceive that the day for private banking operations was passing away, and the fact that the great business of Coutts was turned from a private enterprise into an unlimited private joint stock company, regularly publishing financial statements, was chiefly due to her foresight and influence. This was the more remarkable because she had no "head for figures." Statistics bewildered her, and yet she could grasp their meaning and draw just conclusions from them. In matters of benevolence she seemed to be incapable of distinguishing between the value of five and ten pounds, but when a matter of business, or the making of a bargain was in question, no one could more nicely discriminate. She would give away thousands, but in a matter of business she was just as likely as not to dispute over "the splitting of a hair." We find the same characteristics recorded of her grandfather, Thomas Coutts.

Her memory was a remarkably good one, extracting the essence of things and rejecting the unessential. Although in no sense a student, nor a great reader of books, she was one of the best informed persons of her time. During her long life, she lived in daily contact with leaders

of thought, and the natural powers of her mind, and the careful training it had received in youth, enabled her to profit to an exceptional extent by the conversation of the able men with whom she delighted to surround herself. She had, among other gifts, the art of putting everyone about her at ease, and of making each talk upon the subject in which he or she was most interested. She had heard all the best music, witnessed all the best plays, seen all the best pictures, and read many of the best books produced during a period which will long remain memorable in the history of science, art and literature.

Whatever men were doing and thinking enlisted her sympathy. At an early age she was interested in science by Faraday, but her mind was not a scientific one. It was rather the benefits of science, the important bearing of research upon the well-being of mankind, than any taste for the processes by which the results were arrived at, that appealed to her. In the same way she cared for Art for the sake of its message, rather than from a love of beauty or from an eclectic and fastidious taste. It was the sentiment of a picture, the feelings it touched, that attracted her. The skill of the artist was a matter of secondary consideration.

The welfare of mankind was the absorbing interest of her life. It dominated her mind, it coloured her whole outlook. It was never obtruded but it was always there. Other things were of secondary consideration. For these she found time, entering with zest into the thing of

the moment. If her guests were devoted to science they went away feeling assured, owing to her social gifts and sympathy, that science was one of the things the Baroness most cared to hear about. The politician, the artist, the actor, the writer, the traveller all fell under the same spell. She would talk with equal readiness and interest about the weather, about dress, fashion, the last Drawing Room, the political situation, books, pictures, plays, the condition of China, the atmosphere of Mars, or the latest sensational crime! Whatever interested a guest interested her. But as soon as the attraction had passed, her mind flew back, with the instinct of the magnetic needle for the Pole, to the fixed point of view.

As a speaker, the Baroness possessed gifts of a high order. Though her voice was never strong, it was musical, flexible, and expressive. Her power of persuading and convincing owed almost as much to the way the words were spoken as to the words themselves. This was even more noticeable in her conversation than in her speeches. Her personality dominated her utterances, indeed overshadowed them. Much of the point and force of her remarks was lost when the sentences were considered apart from the inflection of the voice, and the individuality of the speaker. She had a fine sense of the niceties of language, and the happy phrase, the exact word, seemed to come to her without an effort. Her manner was so quiet, simple, and wholly free from any trace of affectation or self-con-

sciousness, that the listener rarely perceived the power of mind and perfection of art that produced the result. The Baroness's many public speeches were never written out beforehand, and she rarely even used notes. But before a speech was to be made, she would shut herself up in her boudoir, and turn her subject over in her mind, viewing it from different points, and selecting and arranging the sequence of her ideas. To this preparation she would devote one, two, or even three hours, but she trusted to the inspiration of the moment for the language in which to express her thoughts. It is doubtful if anyone has ever excelled her in the use of speech as a means of expressing thoughts—or of concealing them. As a politician she would have beaten the "old Parliamentary hand" on his own ground. She recalled with amusement that three Lord Chancellors told her that she would have made the best Lord Chancellor who ever sat on the woolsack. It was difficult to disconcert her, and impossible to obtain from her information that she did not wish to give. One could not extract from her words more meaning than she intended they should convey. On the contrary, when one came to think over exactly what she had said, and to weigh the words with care, one often found they were surprisingly indefinite. Words that had meant so much when spoken lost half of their charm and purport without the voice and personality that gave them life. This was not due to adroitness, or any wish to mislead. Her character was frank and

candid, and all she said and did bore the impress of truth and sincerity.

She had intuitively the gift of being able to adapt her speech to suit the understanding of the person with whom she had to deal. Where the feelings of others were concerned she always displayed tact and consideration which have seldom been equalled and never surpassed. There were few bores of whom she could not rid herself without their being conscious of the way by which it was done. If a gentle and indirect hint proved ineffective, one a shade more definite was used, and the process was repeated until the intelligence was at length reached. These artful methods were naturally exercised chiefly upon acquaintances, anyone, the Baroness thought might feel chagrined if they imagined that the lady with whom they had been holding a delightful conversation, and who seemed so kind and sympathetic, was anxious to get rid of them. They always went away supremely pleased with themselves, and the willing slaves of the great lady by whose charm and personality they had been fascinated.

Her tactful method of dealing with all sorts and conditions of men was undoubtedly due to a noble consideration for the feelings of others. But the Baroness had too much sense of humour not to find attraction in the game. She appreciated the victories she won. It was nerve, skill, and acute perception pitted against commonplace intelligence, and as one watched the comedy one felt that the lady had a true sporting instinct,

that she liked to do the thing neatly and artistically, and enjoyed experimenting upon the obtuseness of human nature

It has been said that the Baroness would have made a great diplomatist. Her control over the expression of her face would in itself have made the fortune of an ambassador charged with delicate negotiations. There never was a more expressive face, when she wished it to be so. But in time of doubt or difficulty it became impenetrable as a sphinx. It could express everything or nothing, at will. Those who engaged in a duel with the Baroness, and hoped to read her meaning in her face, or gather it from her words, were doomed to disappointment. She would argue all round a subject when it suited her purpose, and always evade the point. Of every opening given by an adversary she took advantage. Her logic and insistence in attack were irresistible. They gained the more force from her unruffled demeanour, her gentleness and seeming serenity. But in reply she would, if pressed, ignore logic, facts, and commonsense, take refuge in a paradox, a fiction, or an absurdity, and defend her position with an ingenuity which baffled and disconcerted the opposer.

Notwithstanding the ease and facility with which the Baroness expressed herself in conversation, she wrote with difficulty. Composition was a labour to her. She took infinite pains in framing her many important letters to the press, often re-writing them again and again, altering, transposing paragraphs, twisting about the sen-

tences, substituting a new word here, and another there, till sometimes the pages of manuscript were covered with mysterious hieroglyphics, which she found it impossible to read herself. Her manuscripts were often the puzzle and despair of copyists and secretaries. The perplexing results of her labours she regarded with amusement not unmixed with chagrin. I determined to master the difficulties of her handwriting, and in time I became, as Mr H. W. Wills had been before me, an acknowledged expert, whose aid was sought by many persons in distress. It was not without reluctance, however, that the Baroness admitted my skill. There was a trace of unwillingness to acknowledge that there was someone who could always read what she had written. She also had her doubts as to the accuracy of the performance. How could she be quite certain that my explanation was correct, when she could not make out the passage herself? Besides, to admit anyone's infallibility was contrary to all principles of law and order, and might also result in depriving her of something which all her life had been fruitful of amusement, as well as of complications.

Another failing upon which the Baroness humorously plumed herself was her inability to fill up a cheque. Until the Banking House was turned into a private Joint Stock Company, she rarely used cheques. Her partners sedulously supplied her with cheque books, but they were preserved for ornament or as objects of ironical remarks. She wrote her orders for payment upon

sheets of ordinary note-paper. After the Bank was turned into a Company this practice was discountenanced, much to the chagrin of the lady, who maintained that it was so much easier to write orders than to fill up cheques, which remained to the last an annoyance to her.

"Will you fill up these cheques for me?" she would say, or, "Will you show me how to write these cheques, for I never know what to put", and you knew from the delicate inflection of the voice that there was a determination never to understand! To be made to use cheques was an infringement of her prerogative, and an evidence to her mind that she no longer wielded the same power that she once possessed in the great banking house of Coutts. This was touching upon a tender subject. When no one was present to fill in the cheques, or to tell her exactly in each case what to do, the Baroness serenely made out cheques in various amusing forms.

When her prejudices were aroused, the Baroness was implacable. An offender could do nothing that was not turned against him. If he defended himself when attacked, the Baroness would suggest that his friends must be growing weary of endless explanations, which deceived no one. He might be clever, though she had never seen any evidence of it, and he needed all his cleverness to invent plausible excuses for his conduct. There was probably more in the case against him than appeared. He had got off, but he might not be so successful on the next occasion.

If, on the other hand, someone who had incurred the Baroness's displeasure did not reply to an attack, it is because he knew his case was hopeless. If he had the misfortune to fall ill, illness was often very convenient. No one really knows whether he is ill or not. The doctor's certificate? Doctors are always ready to give a certificate. No one attaches importance to such things. They are a matter of form. It was curious that the illness should happen so opportunely. She noticed it always did. Whenever Mr —— found things unpleasant, he got ill. Criticisms of this kind may appear ineffective when written, but they were destructive as spoken by the Baroness. The inference was plausible, the statement was made with so artful an air of sincerity, as though the view put forward was the only natural one to take, the words used were so carefully phrased, that it was difficult to find an appropriate reply, and a stranger might have been forgiven for imagining that the Baroness was merely talking round a subject the purport of which she had not clearly grasped. But this would have been a mistake. It was an exhibition of the gentle art of disparagement and it was done with such skill that the suggestions stuck in the mind of the hearer, and produced a more lasting effect than plain statement or invective. There was no weapon which the Baroness used with greater skill. It took a good deal, as a general rule, to arouse her animosity. She was slow to enter upon a quarrel, but once in, she took care

that the opposer should beware of her. Nothing was neglected that would ensure victory. If she could avoid doing so, she did not fight single-handed. Many influences were set to work; attacks were planned from quarters where they were least expected; and the foe was suddenly assailed from all sides and forced to capitulate. In these encounters the difficulty she experienced in persuading men to adopt plans of action which seemed quite legitimate to a woman's mind was one of the reasons why, generally speaking, she liked men and trusted them so much more than she did members of her own sex. She certainly was at one with Queen Victoria in her rather poor opinion of the feminine part of humanity. With the exception of Mrs Brown, her advisers and closest friends throughout her life were men.

But the antipathies of which I have spoken were the result of prejudice. They were not aroused by wrongs done to her personally. In these cases she was nobly charitable and forbearing. She forgave agents who robbed her of large sums of money, and at the time of her death she was aiding in many ways the family of a man who, while in her employ, turned out to be a drunken and worthless character. Instances might easily be multiplied. In the ordinary acceptation of the word there was nothing vindictive in Lady Burdett-Coutts's nature. But people who aroused her prejudices learned that she knew how to make her resentment felt.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF

The Baroness was the centre of the society in which she moved—it would, perhaps, be more accurate to say over which she reigned. She made no attempt to exact homage, it was given voluntarily and gladly, and she accepted it as a matter of course. She received as much adulation, probably, as any other woman, but it left her unspoiled. To the last she preserved a child-like simplicity and freshness of heart. The little things in life never ceased to interest her and amuse her. An appropriate Christmas card, a pretty sketch the subject of which was of personal interest, a quaint vase containing a bunch of violets or primroses, gave her more pleasure than costly or pretentious gifts.

The Baroness never lost touch with the younger generation. She did not think that the men and women of former years had a monopoly of all the virtues. Her faith in human progress remained unshaken. When she compared the world of her old age with the conditions that obtained in her youth, it was not to the disadvantage of the former. But there were three disparaging criticisms which she made of the younger generation. She used to say there were no manners nowadays, adding, "How can young people learn manners when there is no one to teach them?" Those who came under the spell of her gracious personality, and social charm, will readily understand this. She also thought that one of the tendencies of modern life was to weaken individuality, to reduce everyone to a uniform conventional standard, which left little room for unaffected origin-

ality,—and accounted for the younger generation being less interesting than the men and women she had known in the past

She also disliked the feverish haste and restlessness of modern life, and had little sympathy with persons who were always in a hurry and who complained of want of time. She would say “Why should people complain of want of time? They have all the time there is. What more can they expect?” Notwithstanding her many occupations, her correspondence, her social duties, and the daily supervision of her household affairs, the Baroness managed to find time for everything. The greater the pressure the more easily she appeared able to deal with each matter requiring her attention. This capacity for transacting business with efficiency and dispatch was the result of clearness of mind. The Baroness never talked round a subject (except when it suited her purpose!) but concentrated her attention upon the points to be settled.

It is easier to describe individual traits of Lady Burdett-Coutts’s complex character, than to give an accurate idea of her character as a whole. Probably no description could succeed in conveying an adequate and truthful impression. But there is a passage in John Evelyn’s delightful *Life of Margaret Godolphin* which appears to give the best and most complete picture of the personality and character of the Baroness, that words can convey. “Never was there a more loyal wife, a more sincere friend, a more consummate Christian, add to this gracefulness

the most becoming Nor was she to be disguised there was nothing more quick and piercing than her apprehension, nothing more faithful than her memory, more solid and mature than her judgment . . . And with these solid parts she had all the advantages of a most sparkling wit, a natural Eloquence, a gentle and agreeable tone of voice, and a charming accent when she spake, whilst the Charms of her countenance were made up of the greatest innocency, modesty, and goodness imaginable, agreeable to the Composure of her thoughts, and the union of a thousand perfections add to all this, she was just, invincible, secret, ingeniously sincere, faithful to her promises and to a miracle, temperate, and mistress of her passions and resolutions . . . O how delightfully entertaining was this Lady, how grave her discourse, how unlike the Conversation of her sex! when she was the most facetious, it would always end in a cheerful composedness the most becoming in the world, for she was the tenderest Creature living of taking advantage of another's Imperfections, nothing could be more humble and full of Compassion, nothing more disposed to all offices of kindness In a word, what perfections were scattered amongst others of her sex, seemed here to be united, and she went every day improving, shining brighter and ascending still in virtue "

After the death of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts on December the 30th, 1906, nearly 30,000 people passed through the room in which her body lay in State to pay a last tribute of affection

THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS

and respect, and at her funeral Westminster Abbey was filled with a vast congregation representing every class and almost every interest of the English nation.

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS TO THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS

FOR more than twenty years an intimate friendship existed between Charles Dickens and Miss Jane Burdett-Coutts, afterwards the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. When the friendship began is not known, but it was probably not later than 1835. The first meeting evidently took place at the house of Mr. Edward Marjoribank, one of the partners in the Banking House of Messrs. Coutts, for in a letter to Miss Burdett-Coutts from Great Hill Place, dated September 5th, 1851, Dickens writes:

"Sometimes of late, when I have been very excited by the crying of two thousand people over the grave of Richard Wardour,¹ new ideas for a story have come into my head as I lay on the ground, with surprising force and brilliance. Last night, being quiet here, I noted them down in a little book I keep. When I went into the

¹ A character in *The Frozen Deep*, a play by Wilkie Collins.

dining room and mentioned what I had done, they all called out 'Friday!' I was born on a Friday, and it is a most astonishing coincidence that I have never in my life, whatever projects I may have determined on otherwise—never begun a book, or begun anything of interest to me, or done anything of importance to me, but it was on a Friday I am certain to be brought round to Friday It must have been on a Friday that I first dined with you at Mr. Marjoribanks "

Readers of Forster's *Life of Dickens* may recall the statement that "Having been away from town when *Pickwick's* first number came out, he made it a superstition to be absent at many future similar times" the purchase of the Gadshill property was completed on a Friday The phrase "I am certain to be brought round to Friday" probably referred to the dates of readings he was to deliver

During this long period Dickens wrote a very large number of letters to Miss Burdett-Coutts, and up to 1855 aided and advised her in many ways He was never formally Miss Burdett-Coutts's secretary, but he discharged many of the more confidential and important duties of a private secretary, investigated the appeals of many a begging letter, acted as her almoner, while he often brought under her notice distressing cases which she never failed to relieve When he found that these many duties made too great a

capacities and qualities of whom he will speak to you. But I have also said to him, as from myself, that I would recommend him also, to suggest *himself*. It is impossible to find a more zealous, honourable, or reliable man. What you would want done would be perfectly compatible with his daily pursuits, and easily discharged along with them. Finally, you need not have (for he is perfectly sensible and manly) the least reluctance to propose it to him as an engagement for a certain remuneration—whatever you may have thought of.”

The Mr. Wills referred to was Mr. William Henry Wills. He was a man of considerable literary ability, one of the original staff of *Punch*; a sub-editor of the *Daily News* under Dickens; he then became Dickens's secretary, and afterwards the assistant editor of *Household Words* and of *All the Year Round*. An excellent man of business Mr. Wills was able to render many valuable services to Miss Burdett-Coutts. Among these one of the most important was an enquiry he conducted in 1862 into the terrible poverty existing in the south-west corner of Ireland. As a result of the report he made to Miss Burdett-Coutts, relief was given, parties of emigrants were sent to Canada, and gradually a fishing industry was organized. Unfortunately, he met with an accident in the hunting

THE FAMOUS RAVENS

field in 1868, and had to retire from active work. He remained, however, as also did Mrs Wills, who was the youngest sister of William and Robert Chambers, the Edinburgh publishers, personal friends of Miss Burdett-Coutts, during the remainder of their lives. Mr Wills died in 1880, and Mrs Wills in 1892.

Not the least famous character in *Barnaby Rudge* was Dickens's first raven. Readers of Forster's *Life of Dickens* may remember the inimitable letter to Maclise, "under an enormous black seal," in which the raven's death was described. The following extracts refer to the same event, and to the second raven sent to Dickens by friends in Yorkshire.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Tuesday, April the Twentieth, 1841

DEAR MISS COUTTS,

The raven's body was removed with every regard for my feelings, in a covered basket. It was taken off to be stuffed, but has not come home yet. He has left a considerable property (chiefly in cheese and half pence) buried in different parts of the garden, and the new raven—for I have a successor—administers to the effects. He had buried in one place a brush (which I have made two efforts to write plainly), a very large hammer, and several raw potatoes, which

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

were discovered yesterday. He was very uneasy just before death, and wandering in his mind talked amazing nonsense. My servant thinks the hammer troubled him. It is supposed to have been stolen from a carpenter of vindictive disposition—he was heard to threaten—and I am not without suspicions of poison.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

27th October, 1841.

Some friends in Yorkshire have sent me a raven, before whom *the* raven (the dead one) sinks into insignificance. He can say anything—and he has a power of swallowing doorkeys and reproducing them at pleasure, which fills all beholders with mingled sensations of horror and delight. His infancy and youth have been passed at a country public house, and I am told that the sight of a drunken man calls forth his utmost powers. My groom is unfortunately sober, and I have had no opportunity of testing this effect; but I have told him “to provide himself” elsewhere, and am looking out for another who can have a dissolute character from his last master.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

Southampton, 11th Dec. 1850.
The Raven sends you his duty. He sends

(with a respectful croak) that if all the people who were attentive to the Nepaulese were like you, he should have nothing to remark upon. But he must take the liberty (he adds) of considering you as a very different person indeed, in all things, from the crowd of their admirers. He hopes you may read an article called the Paper Mill.

The following letter was written shortly before Dickens's first visit to the United States¹. We have no knowledge of "Miss Meredith's pillows", but Miss Hannah Meredith was first the governess and afterwards the life-long companion and friend of Miss Burdett-Coutts. On December 19, 1844, she married Dr William Brown, who was the junior partner in the then well-known medical firm of Tupper, Chilvers, and Brown in Old Burlington Street, London. Dr Tupper was the father of Martin Tupper of *Proverbial Philosophy* fame. After Miss Meredith's marriage to Dr Brown they resided at 80 Piccadilly, a house which joined the residence of Miss Burdett-Coutts, 1 Stratton Street, with an opening cut between the two houses on the ground floor. Both houses belonged to Miss Burdett-Coutts, and 80 Piccadilly had been for a time the residence of her father, Sir Francis Burdett, and was the house where he was arrested and taken to the Tower in 1810. Dr Brown died

¹ See page 196

at Montpellier after a short illness, on October 23rd, 1855. During the last years of her life Mrs Brown became blind, and was cared for by Miss Burdett-Coutts with the utmost affection and solicitude. One of the chief alleviations of her affliction were almost daily visits from Mr (afterwards Sir) Henry Irving, a close friend of both ladies, who came to read to Mrs Brown. Both Dr Brown and his wife are buried in the chancel of St Stephen's Church, Westminster, the church which Miss Burdett-Coutts built in memory of her father, Sir Francis Burdett, Bart.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Dec 14th 1841

DEAR MISS COUTTS,

I am sincerely obliged to you for your kind invitation, but I am obliged, most unfortunately, to deny myself the pleasure of accepting it.

Every day this week I am engaged. As I shall have only a fortnight more when next Sunday comes, I have "registered a vow" (in imitation of Mr O'Connell) to pass those fourteen days at home, and not to be tempted forth. Having withstood your note and acted so manfully in this trying situation, which is a kind of reversal of Eve and the serpent, I feel that I can be adamant to everybody else. This is the only comfort I have in the penmanship of these words.

You will allow me, notwithstanding, to call

FIRST VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES

upon you one morning before I go, to say good-bye, and to take your orders for any article of a portable nature in my new line of business—such as a phial of Niagara water, a neat tomahawk, or a few scales of the celebrated sea serpent, which would perhaps be an improvement on writing paper, for Miss Meredith's pillows.

I beg my compliments to her, and am sincerely and Faithfully Yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

The following letter was written during Dickens's first visit to the United States. Lady Burdett, for whom he was to gather a pebble at Niagara, was the mother of Miss Burdett-Coutts. Dickens sailed from Liverpool the 17th January, 1842, in the Cunard steamer *Britannia*, Captain Hewitt. She was, of course, a paddle-boat. The weather during the whole crossing was very stormy, and at one time it was feared the vessel might be lost. While entering Halifax harbour there was a sudden fog, and the steamer ran upon a mud-bank, and stuck there all night.

BALTIMORE, UNITED STATES

March 22nd. 1842.

DEAR MISS COUTTS,

You have long ago discharged from your mind any favorable opinion you may ever have enter-

tained of me—and have set me down, I know, as a neglectful, erratic, promise-breaking, and most unworthy person.

And yet I have not forgotten the book you asked me to bring home for you—nor the pebble I am to gather for Lady Burdett at Niagara—nor the something unstipulated which I am to put in my portmanteau for Miss Meredith. The truth is that they give me everything here, but Time. That they never will leave me alone. That I shake hands every day when I am not travelling, with five or six hundred people. That Mrs Dickens and I hold a formal Levee in every town we come to, and usually faint away (from fatigue) every day while dressing for dinner—In a word, that we devoutly long for Home, and look forward to the seventh of next June when we sail, please God, from New York—most ardently.

I have sent you some newspapers, and I hope they have reached you. They gave me a ball at New York, at which Three Thousand people were present—and a public dinner besides—and another in Boston—and another in a place called Hartford. Others were projected, literally all through the States, but I gave public notice that I couldn't accept them being of mere flesh and blood, and having only mortal powers of digestion. But I have made an exception

in favor of one body of readers at St Louis—a town in the Far West, on the confines of the Indian territory. I am going there to dinner—it's only two thousand miles from here—and start the day after tomorrow

I look forward to making such an impression on you with the store of anecdote and description with which I shall return, that I can't find it in my Heart to open it—on paper I don't see how I shall ever get rid of my gatherings. It seems to me, at present, that when I come home I must take a cottage on Putney Heath, or Richmond Green, or some other wild and desolate place, and talk to myself for a month or two, until I have sobered down a little, and am quiet again. A prophetic feeling comes upon me sometimes, and hints that I shall return, a bore.

We had a terrible passage out, and we are to return in a sailing ship. Can you think of anything I can bring back for you? If you can possibly commission me to bring you any article whatever from the New country, I need scarcely say how proud and glad you will make me. Any letter addressed to me to the care of David Colden Esquire, 28 Laight Street, Hudson Square, New York, would be forwarded to me wheresoever I might chance to be at the time of its receipt

May I ask when you next see Mr. Marjoribanks to tell him with my best regards, that I thank him very much for his letters, and have received the greatest attention from all his correspondents—except the poor gentleman at Washington—who has been dead six years. Not finding him readily (no wonder!) I went into a bank to ask for him. I happened to make the enquiry of a very old clerk, who staggered to a stool and fell into a cold perspiration, as if he had seen a spectre. Being feeble, and the shock being very great, he took to his bed—but he has since recovered. to the great joy of his wife and family

With every good and cordial wish for your health and happiness—many messages of regard to Miss Meredith—and very many scruples of conscience in sending you so poor a letter from so long a distance—I am always, Dear Miss Coutts

With true regards
Faithfully Your obliged friend

CHARLES DICKENS

P S. I forgot to say that I have been at Washington (which is beyond here) and as far beyond that, again, as Richmond in Virginia. But the prematurely hot weather, and the sight of slaves, turned me back

The book for which Dickens was in the "agonies of plotting and contriving" was *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

Twelfth November 1842.

MY DEAR MISS COUTTS

Your most kind note found me in the agonies of plotting and contriving a new book, in which stage of the tremendous process I am accustomed to walk up and down the house, smiting my forehead dejectedly, and to be so horribly cross and surly, that the boldest fly at my approach at such times, even the Postman knocks at the door with a mild feebleness, and my publishers always come two together, lest I should fall upon a single invader and do murder on his intrusive body

I am afraid if I came to see you under such circumstances, you would be very glad to be rid of me in two hours at the most, but I would risk even that disgrace, in my desire to accept your kind Invitation, if it were not indispensable just now, that I should be always in the way. In starting a work which is to last for twenty months there are so many little things to attend to, which require my personal superintendence, that I am obliged to be constantly on the watch, and I may

add, seriously, that unless I were to shut myself up, obstinately and sullenly in my own room for a great many days without writing a word, I don't think I ever should make a beginning

For these reasons, I am fain to be resolute and virtuous, and to deny myself and Mrs Dickens the great pleasure you offer us. I have not answered your letter until now, because I have really been tempted and hesitating. But the lapse of every new day only gives me a stronger reason for being perseveringly uncomfortable, that out of my gloom and solitude, something comical (or meant to be) may straightway grow up

If you should still be in your present retreat when I have got my first number written (after which, I go on with great nonchalance) we shall be more than glad to come to you for one or two days. In the meantime Mrs Dickens begs me to add her best remembrances to my own, and to say that if you can oblige her with your box at Covent Garden on any of Miss Kemble's nights, she will be very thankful

I am always, Dear Miss Coutts,

Yours faithfully and obliged

CHARLES DICKENS.

It is impossible for me to say how I should argue with Miss Meredith, under existing circumstances

TESTIMONIAL TO MACREADY

To the fund raised as a public tribute to Macready, Miss Burdett-Coutts was of course a generous donor. For his benefit in 1843 Macready played Benedick and Comus. Sheridan Knowles's play *Ingomar*, in which Macready played the name part, was first produced on May 17th, 1820, and was a striking success.

Lord Lansdowne (1780-1863) succeeded his half-brother as third marquis in 1809. He supported the abolition of the Slave Trade, and brought about a coalition between a section of the Whigs and the followers of Canning. He was several times a member of the Cabinet, generally without office.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

Twenty Eighth February 1843

DEAR MISS COUTTS,

I don't know whether you may happen to remember that there was a Public subscription some two or three years ago, for the purchase of a Testimonial to Macready, in honor of his exertions to elevate the National Drama. However, there *was* a handsome piece of plate was designed and made, and is at last to be presented by the Duke of Sussex in the course of the ensuing month.

But the failure of Hammersley's Bank, and the consequent loss of a part of the money, has rendered a second subscription necessary. Being

a member of the committee, and casting about to whom it would be right to apply, I have naturally thought of you. Firstly, because I know you are attached to the most rational of all amusements, and secondly, because in the horrible indifference to it which prevails among people of influence and station, any support from you cannot fail to be at once most valuable to the cause, and most gratifying and cheering to Macready himself

Therefore, if you see no objection to aiding the object (a much higher one than the froth of the world suppose) I shall be most proud and glad to act as your secretary or steward in the matter. Lord Lansdowne is one of the very few men in high places, who have dealt with it as they should. There be some (whose titles would startle you) who have put down their names with round sums attached, but have not put down their money, in consequence of which, I am in danger of turning misanthropical, Byronic, and devilish.

I hope you liked the *Much Ado*—and the *Comus*—and that you will go to see *Virginius* next Monday. If you were not pleased last Friday, I shall certainly carry my misanthropical impulses into effect, and leave off my neckcloth without further notice.

Dear Miss Coutts,

Always Yours faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS.

ANTIPATHY TO LADY SALE

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

Twenty First March 1843

.. Macready has been so much pleased by your approval and support, and is a man who while he courts nobody, feels such encouragement with great keenness, that I shall be glad to present him to you, if you will dine here I know you will like him, as a private gentleman, exceedingly

The Lady Sale whom Dickens renounced for ever, was Florentia, the daughter of George Wynch and the wife of Sir Robert Henry Sale, the distinguished soldier, whose services in India and Afghanistan earned him the title of "Fighting Bob" In 1843 Lady Sale published her journal, describing her sufferings, capture, and escape in Afghanistan Her son-in-law, Lieutenant J D L Sturt of the Engineers, died of wounds on January 9th, 1842, during the retreat of the British force from Kabul

The reason of Dickens's antipathy to Lady Sale is unknown She is described as a typical soldier's wife, whatever that may mean, and was evidently physically strong and courageous, and as she is alleged repeatedly to have led our troops in Afghanistan—a statement which she denies in the preface to her Journal—she may have had an aggressive personality Be that as it may, she at

apartment you write of, on Sunday next; there will I be. I have pondered and reflected about the best time. Some thing seems to point in my mind to 3. But if that something be wrong by the Horse Guards, all times are alike to me in such a pleasant case, and an anonymous figure received by post in the course of to-morrow, will be perfectly understood and gratefully attended to.

There is a terrible paper on Theodore Hook, in the last *Quarterly*—admirably written—as I think, from its internal evidence, by Lockhart. I have not seen anything for a long time so very moving. It fills me with grief and sorrow. Men have been chained to hideous walls and other strange anchors ere now, but few have known such suffering and bitterness at one time or other, as those who have been bound to Pens. A pleasant thought for me who has been using this very quill all day!

Edward William Elton (1794–1843), an excellent actor, the original Beauseant in Bulwer Lytton's play, *The Lady of Lyons*, his most successful rôle was Edgar in *Lear*. When he was returning from Edinburgh, on board the *Pegasus*, the ship struck a rock near Holy Island, and he was drowned. His death caused a strong sensation. Out of fifty-three persons on board, only six were saved.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Twenty Sixth July, 1843.

DEAR MISS COUTTS,

I don't know whether you have seen an advertisement in the papers of this morning, signed by me, and having reference to the family of Mr. Elton the actor, who was drowned in the *Pegasus*. I consented last night to act as chairman of a committee for the assistance of his children and I assure you that their condition is melancholy and desolate beyond all painting

He was a struggling man through his whole existence—always very poor, and never extravagant. His wife died mad, three years ago, and he was left a widower with seven children—who were expecting his knock at the door, when a friend arrived with the terrible news of his Death

If in the great extent of your charities, you have a niche left to fill up, I believe in my heart this is as sad a case as could possibly be put into it. If you have not, I know you will not mind saying so to me

Do not trouble yourself to answer this, as I will call upon you to day between one and two. I called on Sunday last, to enquire after Miss Meredith, but seeing your carriage at the door, I left my card. By the way—lingering at the

TRAGIC DEATH OF E. W. ELTON

street corner, was a very strange looking fellow,
watching your house intently

Dear Miss Coutts,

always Yours faithfully & obliged

CHARLES DICKENS.

I DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

Twenty Eighth July 1843

I will not attempt to tell you what I felt, when
I received your noble letter last night

Trust me that I will be a faithful steward of
your bounty, and that there is no charge in the
wide world I would accept with so much pride
and happiness as any such from you

I should be uneasy if I did not let you know
that your letter being put in my hands at the
Freemasons' last night where the committee were
sitting, I told them what it contained, *before* I
arrived at your injunction of secrecy. But the
gentlemen who were there, were far too much
impressed by what I had conveyed to them ever
to betray your confidence, I am sure I can
answer for that

Charles James Mathews (1803-78), actor,
dramatist, theatrical manager Thomas Slingsby
Duncombe (1796-1861), Radical politician, who
in 1842 presented the Chartist petition Alfred
Bunn (1796-1860), was in 1843 manager of

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres As he had published verses, he was satirically nicknamed "Poet Bunn" He is said to have supplied Thackeray with material for the character of Mr Dolphin, the manager, in *Pendennis*

BROADSTAIRS, KENT.

Monday Seventh August 1843

I went up to town last Thursday to preside at a meeting of the Committee for poor Mr Elton's children; but as I came back here next morning, I had no opportunity of calling on you

Owing to the offensive conduct of Mr. Charles Mathews and his estimable lady, we were unable to use either Harley, the Keeleys, Mrs Nisbett, or Mrs Stirling, at the Haymarket, although they had all been previously announced with Mr Webster's full consent The consequence was, that we were obliged at the last moment to alter an excellent bill, and the entertainments were very trash You will be glad to hear, however, that the receipts were £280, a very large sum in that Theatre, which when crammed to the very utmost will not hold more than £300 Including this sum, we had in hand on Thursday night, hard upon a thousand pounds since which time the benefit at the Surrey (the only return I have yet had) has produced a hundred and forty

CARE OF MR ELTON'S CHILDREN

pounds more, and some additional private subscriptions have also come in

Finding it exceedingly difficult in the midst of their trouble to arrive with anything like tolerable certainty at the weekly expenses of the family, last Thursday, I placed £10—the ten you sent me—in the hands of a lady who knows them and can be trusted to make a careful report and begged her to account to me for it, and to get me an estimate by the time we meet again (next Monday) of their average bills. Before I see you on that head, I will visit the children myself. For I wish particularly to speak to the eldest girl about it, and to be very careful that your assistance is free from the controul of any relation or friend but such as she knows can be thoroughly trusted, and is kindly disposed towards them. I fancy I have observed some slight signs and tokens, which render this precaution indispensable.

This little place is very bright and beautiful—and I wish you and your Patient could see it this morning. I have been here six years, and have never had a Piano next door, but this fortune was too good to last, and now there is one close to the little bay window of the room I write in, which has six years' agony in every note it utters. I have been already obliged to take refuge on the other side of the house, but that looks into a street where the "Flies" stand, and where there

are donkeys and drivers out of number Their music is almost as bad as the other, and between the two, I was driven into such a state of desperation on Saturday, that I thought I must have run away and deserted my family The matter was not mended when the paper came down, with Mr Thomas Duncombe's tribute to the character and acquirements of Mr. Bunn. which so exasperated me (though the two gentleman are well worthy of each other's friendship) that I walked ten miles over burning chalk, before I could resume the least composure

Charley and two hundred and fifty other children, are making fortifications in the sand with wooden spades, and picking up shells and sea weeds He is still full of his last visit to you, and brightened up like burnished copper at breakfast when I asked him if he had any message to send If I thought his love would *do* (he said) he should like to forward it So I promised to convey it to you, in due form I have some idea of writing him a child's History of England, to the end that he may have tender-hearted notions of War and Murder, and may not fix his affections on wrong heroes, or see the bright side of Glory's sword and know nothing of the rusty one If I should carry it out, I shall live in the hope that you will read it one wet day

Nell was one of the many children for whose start in life Miss Burdett-Coutts provided. Dickens's reference to the crime of Elizabeth Brownrigg as a matter apparently of common knowledge, seventy-six years after it was committed, shows how deep an impression was made upon the public mind by the story of her terrible cruelties to her apprentices. She was a midwife living in Fleur de Lys Court, Fleet Street, London, and about 1765 was appointed midwife for the parish workhouse of St Dunstan's in the West. She had three apprentices, whom she treated in the most inhuman manner, and to one of them, Mary Clifford, her cruelties were so great as to cause death. Elizabeth Brownrigg was tried, found guilty, and hanged at Tyburn, September 14th, 1767. Her skeleton was exposed in a niche at Surgeons' Hall in the Old Bailey, that the heinousness of her cruelty might make a more lasting impression on the minds of the spectators.

The *President* was an American steamer which sailed from New York for Liverpool March 21st, 1841. She was sighted on March 24th, but was never seen or heard of again.

Tyrone Power (1797-1891) was a clever Irish comedian who went down in the *President*.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE *Second November* 1843

Nell distracts me. It unfortunately happens that there is no Institution (that I know of,

or can find out, at least) where such a girl could learn a trade. This throws one on a choice of trades. Then I think of tambour-working—then of stay-making—then of shoe-binding—then of ready made linening—then of Millinery—then of straw Bonnet making—then of Mrs. Brownrigge—then of surplus labor—and then I give it up with a headache

Would it not be a good plan, first, to find out what the child thinks herself, and then to cast about among your servants for instance, whether they have not some friend or relation who is, or who knows some other friend or relation who is, in a respectable little way of business that would do for her? I could very easily find out, by personal inspection, whether it promised well. None of our former handmaidens are settled in any trade, except a most respectable cook, who married from us (in a cab—No 74) and keeps a thriving shop, I am told, “in the general line.” But there seems to be nothing to learn in the general line, except making up infinitesimal parcels of pepper, and chopping soap into little blocks—and she can do that now, I dare say

There’s half a bonnet-shop in Tottenham Court Road, with an Inscription in the window in these words “Wonted a feamail Prentis with a premum.” *That* wouldn’t do, perhaps?

This day week, I shall have paid the Eltons,

the full amount you gave me One of the poor girls is very ill, I am sorry to say, and seems consumptive Did you see the cruel hoax of the bottle? We have the slip of paper which was shut up in it, and it is not (they tell me) in his handwriting, or at all like it What strange minds those must be, which can find delight in such intolerable cruelties—for which, and which only, if I had my will, I would flog at the church doors. After the *President* went down, Mrs Power had some new letter, almost every day, saying that he had landed in Ireland, and was staying at the Writer's house!

The Christmas story which was to make Miss Burdett-Coutts cry was "*The Chimes*, a goblin story of some bells that rang an Old Year out and a New Year in " The story was illustrated by Maclise, Doyle, Leech, and Clarkson Stanfield

In a letter of April 30th, 1844, Dickens explained to Clarkson Stanfield that "the sanatorium or sick-house is for students, governesses, clerks, young artists and so forth, who are above hospitals, and not rich enough to be well attended in illness in their own lodgings " It has proved impossible to ascertain where this "Sanatorium or Sick House" existed, and it is not improbable that out of it grew the much more ambitious scheme for the benefit of writers, artists and others, known as "The Guild of Literature and Art," some par-

ticulars of which are given in the introduction to the letter of March 20th, 1851.

The little book by a working man, was "*Evenings of a Working Man, being the occupation of his scanty leisure.* By John Overs. With a Preface relative to the Author, by Charles Dickens. London, T C Newby, 1844." Overs was a self-educated working man, a carpenter, who sent Dickens some verses. Dickens had known him for about six years, and wrote the preface to a collection of short stories, which were published to help to provide for an ailing wife and a young family.

Dickens did not at first make his headquarters in Italy, at the Palazzo Peschiere, as he had intended, but on the advice of a friend took the Villa di Bella Vista, at Albaro, a suburb of Genoa. The invalid lady referred to was Miss Meredith, Miss Burdett-Coutts's life-long friend.

PIAZZA COFFEE HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN

Sunday December Eighth 1844.

I have been in town a very few days, and leave it again, and start for Italy, tonight. I hoped to have seen you as a matter of course, but when I had disposed of the business part of my Christmas Book (which mainly brought me here, and imprisoned me at the Printer's two days) I had some arrangements to make for the extrication of some unhappy people from circumstances of

great distress and perplexity, which have occupied my whole time, so that I have seen no one, and gone nowhere

I had the greatest pleasure some months ago, in the receipt of your interesting letter from Germany I was going to answer it with some account of my Italian adventures, but as soon as I had any to narrate, the time had come for my sitting down to my little book, and when I got up again, it was to come here I hope you will like those *Chimes* which will be published on the 16th and though I am not malicious, I am bent on making you cry, or being most horribly disappointed

The Sanatorium Committee have informed me of your munificent donation to that Establishment There is not in England an Institution whose design is more noble, useful, and excellent I know some little histories connected with that place, and the blessing it has proved in sickness and Death, which are among the most affecting incidents that have ever come within my observation

You may possibly have seen a Preface I wrote, before leaving England, to a little book by a Working Man, and may have learned from the newspapers that he is dead leaving a destitute wife and six children, of whom one is a cripple I have addressed a letter to the Governors of the

Orphan Working School in behalf of the eldest boy· and they tell me he has a good chance of being elected into that Institution in April next It has occurred to me that at some time or other you might have an opportunity of presenting one of the Girls to some other school or charity, and as I know full well that in such an event you would rather thank than blame me for making a real and strong case known to you, I send you the Childrens' names and ages

Amelia Overs 11 years old

John Richard 9

Harriett 7

Geraldine 6

Editha 4

John 4 months

They live, at present, at 55 Vauxhall Street, Lambeth

My head quarters in Italy are at Genoa where we live in a Palace (the Palazzo Peschiere) something larger than Whitehall multiplied by four, and where Charley and his Giant sisters play among orange Trees and Fountains all day long They were particularly anxious when I came away, that I should give their loves to you, and they entrusted me with the Private commission that I should ascertain whether "That Lady" was still in bed upstairs In pursuing my enquiries on this head, I have received information in

reference to that lady, which has quite delighted me, and not at all surprised me. I hope I may still live in her memory; and that I may venture to send her my regards and congratulations.

I have been to Modena, Parma, Bologna, Ferrara, Cremona, Venice, and a hundred other places. Florence, Rome, Naples, and Palermo lie before me. I never could have believed in, and never did imagine, the full splendour and glory of Venice. That wonderful dream. The three days that I passed there, were like a Thousand and One Arabian Nights wildly exaggerated a thousand and one times. I read *Romeo and Juliet* in Verona too, and bought some tooth-ache mixture of an apothecary in Mantua, lean enough and poor enough to "go on" in the Tragedy. I came to England by the Simplon—sledging through the snow upon the top—and through Switzerland, which was cool. But beautiful and grand, beyond expression. I shall remain in Paris—at the Hotel Brighton—until Friday Evening next, and if at that place or at any other, you could give me any commission to execute for you, I need not say how happy it would make me.

The steps where there used formerly to be a daily gathering of artists' models are the magni-

ficient flight which leads from the Piazza di Spagna to the Church of SS Trinita de 'Monti. The first house on the right of these steps is where Keats died, and is now the Keats-Shelley Memorial House

The Reverend Sydney Smith (1771-1845), one of the wittiest Englishmen of any age, was honoured for his manliness and honesty. He was one of the founders of *The Edinburgh Review*.

Thomas Hood (1799-1845), the friend of Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey, a great poet whose genius has never been adequately recognized, for while "The Song of the Shirt," and "The Bridge of Sighs" have justly retained their popularity, such a great poem as "The Haunted House" is almost unknown. Dickens pays no more than an adequate tribute to him when he writes that he was a man "of prodigious force and genius as a poet." "The lady" was Mrs Brown (*née* Meredith)

ROME *Eighteenth March* 1845.

MY DEAR MISS COUTTS, I am very much afraid that the date of this letter will contrast, to my disadvantage, with the date of Twelfth Night; which you made a proud night for Charley in Genoa, and a happy night to me in the more secret quarter of my own breast, by your kind and generous remembrance. But I have been so constantly and incessantly on the wing since

that great finale of the Christmas Holidays, and have been so cold, and so wet, and so muddy, and so everything which is currently supposed to be incompatible with Italy—and have been into such extraordinary places, and have eaten such unaccountable meals, and have slept in such incredible beds, and have led altogether such a wild preposterous life—that I have not had the heart to write to you, lest my letter, partaking in some degree of the character of my existence, should be of too vagabond a nature for delivery at your door

Before I left Genoa, I had all the knives locked up, fearing that Charley would otherwise in the excitement of his feelings, lay hands upon a sharp one, and do himself a mischief—I don't mean with any evil design upon his life, but in the endeavour to make a pen wherewith to write a note to you. The intention was so very active within him that I should have allowed him to gratify it, but for his writing being something large for the Foreign Post, which, at his rate of penmanship, would hardly carry more than his name. But I gave him a solemn promise that I would thank you twenty thousand times. That I would report him tolerant of Italian life and manners, but not attached to them yielding a strong preference to those of his own country. That I would say he never could forget his ride

with you to Hampstead That I would tell you that such a thing as a Twelfth cake was never seen in Genoa before, and that when it went to a Swiss Pastry-cook's in that City, to have the sugar repaired (it was a very little chipped at one corner) it was *exhibited* to the principal Inhabitants, as a wonder and Marvel That I would give his love and his sisters' loves to "that lady", and would add that I had at length succeeded in impressing on their minds the great truth that she didn't always live in bed That I would say that he looked forward to coming with me to see and thank you on our return to England And that I would be sure to tell you a great deal more, which I will not inflict upon you on any account

The weather has been atrocious ever since I returned from England at Christmas I do not think I ever felt it so cold as between this place and Naples, about a month ago. Between Naples and Paestum too, three weeks ago, with a cold North wind blowing over mountains covered with snow, it was quite intolerable Within the last three days, there have been glimpses of Spring I will not say more, in the fulness of my heart, for experience has taught me that tomorrow may be deep in winter again I have certainly seen more Sun in England, between the end of December and the middle of

March, than I have seen in Italy in that time, and for violent and sudden changes, there is surely no country in the world more remarkable than this. When it is fine (as people say) it is very fine—so beautiful, that the really good days blot out the recollection of the bad ones. But I do honestly believe that it is not oftener fine here, than it is elsewhere, and that we are far better off at home in that respect, than anything short of the rack, would induce most people to confess.

In the mass, I like the common people of Italy, very much—the Neapolitans least of all, the Romans next, for they are fierce and brutal. Not falling on very good specimens of the higher orders, in the beginning, I have not pursued that Enquiry. I have had no leisure to do so, if I had had the inclination, so I have avoided them as much as possible, and have kept the greater part of my letters of introduction in my own desk. Florence I have not yet seen, intending to take it, next week, on my way back to Genoa. But of all the places I have seen, I like Venice, Genoa, and Verona, most. The Bay of Genoa has charms, in my eyes, which the Bay of Naples wants. The city of Genoa is very picturesque and beautiful, and the house we live in, is really like a Palace in a Fairy Tale.

I cannot remember, to my satisfaction, whether you were ever at Herculaneum and Pompeii.

Though my impression is, that I have heard you speak of them. The interest and wonder of those ruined places, far exceeded my utmost expectations. Venice was such a splendid Dream to me, that I can never speak of it,—from sheer inability to describe its effect upon my mind. The ancient parts of Rome, and a portion of the Campagna, are *what I meant* when I came here; the rest a little below my imaginary mark, and very unlike it. The Coliseum by daylight, moonlight, torchlight, and every sort of light, most stupendous and awful. Saint Peter's not so impressive within, as many cathedrals I have seen at home. The great altar, and the state entrance to the subterranean church might be Rundell and Bridge's show-room. And the canopies, hangings, and carpets (of all sorts of reds and greens) now hung up, and put down, for the Holy-Week ceremonies, have the effect of an enormous Bon-bon. Before which, and round which, and indeed out of which, they are perpetually carrying the poor old Pope about on men's shoulders, like a gorgeous Guy Faux.

The drollest thing I have seen, is a daily gathering of artists' "Models" on the steps of a church near the house (Meloni's Hotel) in which we live where they dispose themselves in conventionally picturesque attitudes, and wait to be hired as sitters. The first time I went up there,

I could *not* conceive how their faces were familiar to me—how they seemed to have bored me, for many years, in every variety of action and costume—and to come back upon my sight as perfect nightmares. At last it flashed upon me all at once that we had made acquaintance, and improved it, on the walls of the Royal Academy. So we had indeed. And there is not one among them whom you wouldn't know, at first sight, as well as the statue at Charing Cross. The most aggravating of the party is a dismal old patriarch, with very long white hair and beard, who carries a great staff in his hand, which staff has been faithfully copied at the Exhibition in all its twists and knots, at least once through the catalogue. He is the venerable model. Another man in a sheepskin, who always lies asleep in the sun (when there is any) is the Pastoral Model. Another man in a brown cloak who leans against a wall with his arms folded, is the assassin model. Another man who looks over his shoulder and always seems to be going away, but never goes, is the haughty model. Several women and children form the family models, and the cream of the whole is, that they are one and all the falsest rascals in Rome or out of it, being specially made up for their trade, and having no likeness among the whole population. It is a good illustration of the student life as it is, that young

men should go on copying these people elaborately time after time, and time out of mind, and find nothing fresh or suggestive in the actual world about them.

My English papers tell me of the death of Sydney Smith, whom I deeply regret. I also hear privately, that Hood, the author, is past all chance of recovery. He was (I have a sad presentiment that even now I may speak of him as something past) a man of great power—of prodigious force and genius as a poet—and not generally known perhaps, by his best credentials. Personally he had a most noble and generous spirit. When he was under the pressure of severe misfortune and illness, and I had never seen him, he went far out of his way to praise me, and wrote (in the *Athenæum*) a paper on *The Curiosity Shop*, so full of enthusiasm and high appreciation, and so free from any taint of envy or reluctance to acknowledge me a young man far more fortunate than himself, that I can hardly bear to think of it.

I hope to be in Genoa again before the middle of next month, and have arranged to leave there and turn homeward, in the middle of June. Whether we may linger on the way in France or Switzerland, I do not yet quite know. But in that case it is probable that I may run on to London for two or three days to preside at a

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK

Public Dinner in aid of the Sanatorium I shall hope to see you then, at latest, unless (I wish there were any hope of it!) you should be coming Genoa-way, and would give me a chance of shewing you the Peschiere orange trees.

In any case when I am among them again, I shall trouble you with at least one more of Charley's messages, and a few words of my own. For I fear that I may otherwise (not undeservedly) pass out of your remembrance; and believe me Dear Miss Coutts there are not many memories from which it would give me so much pain to fade, as from yours I rate its worth too highly.

Ever Yours faithfully,

CHARLES DICKENS

P.S. Mrs Dickens begs to unite in best regards to yourself, and "the lady"—who is well, I hope—and happy, I know. I hope you cried when you read the *Chimes*

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

Seventeenth September 1845

... With a smaller sum, my dear Miss Coutts, I think I can do, on your behalf, an infinitely greater service. George Cruikshank came to me some weeks ago, and told me the facts of the

melancholy little history I am going to state to you. He asked me if I thought I could influence any rich friend in the sufferer's behalf. You were not in the way. I do not know that I should have had the courage to come to you, if you had been, and I told him, No; I could not then; but if I ever could, I would. I should premise that Cruikshank is one of the best creatures in the world in his own odd way (he is a live caricature himself), and that to the extent of his means, he had rendered assistance here, already, from his own purse.

I don't know if you ever saw a book called *Mornings at Bow Street*. It is a collection of Bow Street reports that appeared, years and years ago, in the *Morning Herald*, and did the paper immense service at that time. The writer is a Mr White, who from that time until very recently, has been connected with the *Herald* as one of its sub-editors. The paper changed hands within this year and a Half, or so—he was not wanted in the new arrangements—and at 60 years of age was suddenly discharged, with a month's salary, from the establishment that had not only been his income but his whole prospect, for he thought himself (quite naturally) a leaf of the tree, and believed he would never be shaken off until he died. He had lived upon his salary, but had done no more—I really don't see how

he could have done more—and this was a blow, as if his Bank had failed, or he had become paralyzed

His daughter had been engaged to be married, *Feather Years*. Her lover was not rich—was fighting his way, very slowly, to the Bar—and they had always said they would be married when he was 'called'. After all these many years, he was called, at last, and her wedding clothes were being made, when one night, (just at the time of this discharge) after they had been to the opera together, he went home to his chambers and was seized with congestion of the Brain. In a very few hours she was sent for. If she wished to see him before he died, the message said, she must come without delay. She was taken down to the Adelphi (where the chambers were) by her mother, and they arrived in the Bedroom, just in time to see him die. Quite frantic, she ran out of the chamber, opened a window, four tall stories high, and plunged herself, head-foremost from it! By a kind of miracle, she fell into a tank of water at the back of one of the neighbouring houses, and was taken out, insensible, but unhurt. Since that time, she has been watched, day and night. Her mother has never been told the Truth, but the father knows it. The poor girl sits all day in a sort of dream, repeating little scraps of

comfort from the Bible. She has never shed a tear

The wretched father is oppressed with some small debts. But they are very small, and if he could release his plate, which he has pawned for Thirty Pounds, I have no doubt Cruikshank could compound for every one of them with the produce of its sale, and then he could, with an easier mind, seek some employment or at the worst, go away to live with his son who is a poor curate—I think in Wales. My dear Miss Coutts, these are all miserable facts within my knowledge. Thirty Pounds here, will be like Help from Heaven. There is no possibility of imposition, Cruikshank has known the parties twenty years at least, and the circumstances surely are peculiarly affecting and distressful

My letter is so long already, that I will tell of the other Eltons¹ in my next. We have never had the least trouble with them, and they are all as well, as happy, and as full of promise—thank God for it!—as we could possibly desire

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE *Seventh January 1846*

. I see almost daily, in those sources of intelligence [newspapers] the most prodigious accounts of my occupations, invitations, &c &c, which are all so new to me that they make my hair stand on end

¹ The children of E. W. Elton, the actor, drowned in 1843

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

Wednesday, Twenty Second April 1846

Until within a fortnight or three weeks ago, I have retained the intention of entering Charley in May [at King's College] But since then, I have conceived the idea of going to Switzerland for a year Firstly, because I am most desirous to separate myself in a marked way from the *Daily News* (with which I have long since ceased to have any connexion, and in connecting myself with which at all, I have no doubt I made a mistake). Secondly, because I have a long book to write, which I could write better in retirement Thirdly, because I want to get up some mountain knowledge in all the four seasons of the year, for purposes of fiction

In 1846 Miss Burdett-Coutts decided to establish a Home for Women in the West End of London, and among those she first consulted was Dickens, who spared neither time nor trouble in furtherance of the scheme

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Twenty Sixth May 1846.

. In reference to the Asylum, it seems to me very expedient that you should know, if

possible, whether the Government would assist you to the extent of informing you from time to time into what distant parts of the World, women could be sent for marriage, with the greatest hope for their future families, and with the greatest service to the existing male population, whether expatriated from England or born there. If these poor women *could* be sent abroad with the distinct recognition and aid of the Government, it would be a service to the effort. But I have (with reason) a doubt of all Governments in England considering such a question in the light in which men undertaking that immense responsibility, are bound, before God, to consider it. And therefore I would suggest this appeal to you, merely as something which you owe to yourself and to the experiment, the failure of which, does not at all affect the immeasurable goodness and happiness of the project itself.

I do not think it would be necessary, in the first instance at all events, to build a house for the Asylum. There are many houses, either in London or in the immediate neighbourhood, that could be altered for the purpose. It would be necessary to limit the number of inmates, but I would make the reception of them as easy as possible to themselves. I would put it in the power of any Governor of a London Prison to

send an unhappy creature of this kind (by her own choice of course) straight from his prison, when her term expired, to the asylum I would put it in the power of any penitent creature to knock at the door, and say For God's sake, take me in But I would divide the interior into two portions; and into the first portion I would put all new-comers without exception, as a place of probation, whence they should pass, by their own good conduct and self-denial alone, into what I may call the Society of the house I do not know of any plan, so well conceived, or so firmly grounded in a knowledge of human nature, or so judiciously addressed to it, for observance in this place, as what is called Captain Maconochie's Mark System, which I will try very roughly and generally, to describe

A woman or girl coming to the asylum, it is explained to her that she has come there for *useful* repentance and reform, and means her past way of life has been dreadful in its nature and consequences, and full of affliction, misery, and despair to *herself* Never mind society while she is at that pass Society has used her ill and turned away from her, and she cannot be expected to take much heed of its rights or wrongs It is destructive to herself, and there is no hope in it, or in her, as long as she pursues it It is explained to her that she is degraded

and fallen, but not lost, having this shelter, and that the means of Return to Happiness are now about to be put into her own hands, and trusted to her own keeping. That with this view, she is instead of being placed in this probationary class for a month, or two months, or three months, or any specified *time* whatever, required to earn there a certain number of *Marks* (they are mere scratches in a book) so that she may make her probation a very short one, or a very long one, according to her own conduct. For so much work, she has so many marks, for a day's good conduct, so many more. For every instance of ill-temper, disrespect, bad language, any outbreak of any sort or kind, so many—a very large number in proportion to her receipts—are deducted. A perfect Debtor and Creditor account is kept between her and the Superintendent, for every day; and the state of that account, it is in her own power and nobody else's, to adjust to her advantage. It is expressly pointed out to her, that before she can be considered qualified to return to any kind of society—even to the Society of the asylum—she must give proofs of her power of self-restraint and her sincerity, and her determination to try to shew that she deserves the confidence it is proposed to place in her. Her pride, emulation, her sense of shame, her heart, her reason, and

her interest, are all appealed to at once, and if she pass through this trial, she *must* (I believe it to be in the eternal nature of things) rise somewhat in her own self-respect, and give the Managers a power of appeal to her, in future, which nothing else could invest them with. I would carry a modification of this mark system through the whole establishment, for it is its great philosophy and its chief excellence that it is not a mere form or course of training adapted to the life within the house, but is a preparation—which is a much higher consideration—for the right performance of duty outside, and for the formation of habits of firmness and self-restraint. And the more these unfortunate persons were educated in their duty towards Heaven and Earth, and the more they were tried on this plan, the more they would feel that to dream of returning to society, or of becoming virtuous wives, until they had earned a certain gross number of marks required of everyone without the least exception, would be to prove that they were not worthy of restoration to the place they had lost. It is a part of this system, even to put at last, some temptation within their reach, as enabling them to go out, putting them in possession of some money, and the like, for it is clear that unless they are used to some temptation and used to resist it, within the walls,

their capacity of resisting it without, cannot be considered as fairly tested

What they would be taught in the house, would be grounded in religion, most unquestionably. It must be the basis of the whole system. But it is very essential in dealing with this class of persons to have a system of training established, which while it is steady and firm, is cheerful and hopeful. Order, punctuality, cleanliness, the whole routine of household duties, as washing, mending, cooking—the establishment itself would supply the means of teaching practically, to every one. But then I would have it understood by all—I would have it written up in every room—that they were not going through a monotonous round of occupation and self-denial which began and ended there, but which began, or was resumed, under that roof, and would end, by God's blessing, in happy homes of their own.

I have said that I would put it in the power of Governors of Prisons to recommend Inmates. I think this most important, because such gentlemen as Mr Chesterton of the Middlesex House of Correction, and Lieutenant Tracy of Cold Bath Fields, Bridewell, (both of whom I know very well) are well acquainted with the good that is in the bottom of the hearts of many of these poor creatures, and with the whole

history of their past lives, and frequently have deplored to me the not having any such place as the proposed establishment, to which to send them when they are set free from Prison. It is necessary to observe that very many of these unfortunate women are constantly in and out of the Prisons, for no other fault or crime than their original one of having fallen from virtue. Policemen can take them up, almost when they choose, for being of that class, and being in the streets, and the magistrates commit them to Jail for short terms. When they come out, they can but return to their old occupation, and so come in again. It is well known that many of them fee the Police to remain unmolested, and being too poor to pay the fee, or dissipating the money in some other way, are taken up again, forthwith. Very many of them are good, excellent, steady characters when under restraint—even without the advantage of systematic training, which they would have in this Institution—and are tender nurses to the sick, and are as kind and gentle as the best of women.

There is no doubt that many of them would go on well for some time, and would then be seized with a violent fit of the most extraordinary passion, apparently quite motiveless, and insist on going away. There seems to be something

inherent in their course of life, which engenders and awakens a sudden restlessness and recklessness which may be long suppressed, but breaks out like madness, and which all people who have had opportunities of observation in Penitentiaries and elsewhere, must have contemplated with astonishment and pity. I would have some rule to the effect that no request to be allowed to go away would be received for at least four and twenty hours, and that in the interval the person should be kindly reasoned with, if possible, and implored to consider well what she was doing. This sudden dashing down of all the building up of months upon months, is, to my thinking, so distinctly a Disease with the persons under consideration that I would pay particular attention to it, and treat it with particular gentleness and anxiety; *and I would not make one, or two, or three, or four, or six departures from the establishment a binding reason against the re-admission of that person being again penitent*, but leave it to the Managers to decide upon the merits of the case giving very great weight to general good conduct within the house

I would begin with some comparatively small number—say thirty—and I would have it impressed upon them, from day to day, that the success of the experiment rested with them, and that on their conduct depended the rescue

and salvation, of hundreds and thousands of women yet unborn. In what proportion this experiment would be successful, it is very difficult to predict, but I think that if the Establishment were founded on a well-considered system, and were well managed, one half of the Inmates would be reclaimed from the very beginning, and that after a time the proportion would be much larger. I believe this estimate to be within very reasonable bounds.

The main question that arises is, if the co-operation of the Government—beginning at that point when they are supposed to be reclaimed—cannot be secured, how are they to be provided for, permanently? Supposing the Mark system and the training to be very successful, and gradually to acquire a great share of public confidence and respect, I think it not too sanguine to suppose that many good people would be glad to take them into situations. But the power of beginning life anew, in a world perfectly untried by them, would be so important in many cases, as an effectual detaching of them from old associates, and from the chances of recognition and challenge, that it is most desirable to be, some how or other, attained.

I do not know whether you would be disposed to entrust me with any share in the supervision and direction of the Institution. But I need

not say that I should enter on such a task with my whole heart and soul; and that in this respect, as in all others, I have but one sincere and zealous wish to assist you, by any humble means in my power, in carrying out your benevolent institution.

And at all events it would be necessary for you to have, in the first instance, on paper, all the results of previous experience in this way, as regards scheme, plan, management, and expence. These I think I could procure, and render plain, as quietly and satisfactorily as any one. And I would suggest to you, this course of action.

That the School and Church proceeding—this Design remain in abeyance for the present. That when I go to Paris (whither I shall remove, please God, before Christmas) I examine every Institution of this sort existing there, and gather together all the information I possibly can. I believe more valuable knowledge is to be got there, on such a subject, than anywhere else, and this, combined with the results of our English experience, I would digest into the plainest and clearest form; so that you could see it, as if it were a Map. And in the meantime you would have these advantages

1. That in the establishment of your school and Dispensary, you might find or make some

Instruments that would be very important and useful in the working out of this school

2 That there will then have been matured, and probably tried, certain partial schemes going a very little way on this same road, which are now on foot in the City of London, and the success or failure of which will be alike instructive.

3 That there is a very great probability of the whole Transportation system being shortly brought under the consideration of the Legislature, and it is particularly worthy of consideration that the various preliminary reports on the subject, (which I have lately been reading) recognise the question of sending out women to the different settlements, as one of very great importance

I have that deep sense, dear Miss Coutts, of the value of your confidence in such a matter, and of the pure, exalted, and generous motives by which you are impelled, that I feel a most earnest anxiety that such an effort as you contemplate in behalf of your Sex, should have every advantage in the outset it can possibly receive, and should, if undertaken at all, be undertaken to the lasting honor of your name and Country. In this feeling, I make the suggestion I think best calculated to promote that end. Trust me, if you agree in it, I will not lose sight of the

subject, or grow cold to it, or fail to bestow upon it my best exertions and reflection. But, if there be any other course you would prefer to take, and you will tell me so, I shall be as devoted to you in that as in this, & as much honored by being asked to render you the least assistance.

In furtherance of his plan to put it in the power of magistrates, governors of prisons, and others, to recommend inmates to the Home, which it had been decided should be called *Urania Cottage*, and which was located at Shepherd's Bush, Dickens drew up the following anonymous invitation, which was printed in a four-page quarto form. This remarkable appeal, which will certainly rank among the most beautiful and pathetic things Dickens ever wrote, had never been fully published until during 1930 a reprint of it was issued for private circulation to the members of the Boston Bibliophile Society, United States. It has been pointed out by Mr J W 'T' Ley that the appeal was written the same year Dickens began *David Copperfield*, and Mr Ley thinks that the character of Martha was probably suggested to the author by his work on behalf of the Home at Shepherd's Bush.

Mrs Burdett-Coutts's London residence was 1, Stratton Street, and the chief windows overlooked Piccadilly. The house with its many historic associations has been demolished.

You will see, on beginning to read this letter, that it is not addressed to you by name. But I address it to a woman—a very young woman still—who was born to be happy, and has lived miserably, who has no prospect before her but sorrow, or behind her but a wasted youth, who, if she has ever been a mother, has felt shame, instead of pride in her own unhappy child.

You are such a person, or this letter would not be put into your hands. If you have ever wished (I know you must have done so, sometimes) for a chance of rising out of your sad life, and having friends, a quiet home, means of being useful to yourself and others, peace of mind, self-respect, everything you have lost, pray read it attentively, and reflect upon it afterwards. I am going to offer you, not the chance but the certainty of all these blessings, if you will exert yourself to deserve them. And do not think that I write to you as if I felt myself very much above you, or wished to hurt your feelings by reminding you of the situation in which you are placed. God forbid! I mean nothing but kindness to you, and I write as if you were my sister.

Think, for a moment, what your present situation is. Think how impossible it is that it ever can be better if you continue to live as you have lived, and how certain it is that it must be

worse You know what the streets are, you know how cruel the companions that you find there, are; you know the vices practised there, and to what wretched consequences they bring you, even while you are young Shunned by decent people, marked out from all other kinds of women as you walk along, avoided by the very children, hunted by the police, imprisoned, and only set free to be imprisoned over and over again—reading this very letter in a common jail—you have, already, dismal experience of the truth But, to grow old in such a way of life, and among such company—to escape an early death from terrible disease, or your own maddened hand, and arrive at old age in such a course—will be an aggravation of every misery that you know now, which words cannot describe Imagine for yourself the bed on which you, then an object terrible to look at, will lie down to die Imagine all the long, long years of shame, want, crime, and ruin, that will rise before you And by that dreadful day, and by the Judgment that will follow it, and by the recollection that you are certain to have then, when it is too late, of the offer that is made to you, when it is NOT too late, I implore you to think of it, and weigh it well!

There is a lady in this town, who, from the windows of her house, has seen such as you

A REMARKABLE APPEAL

going past at night, and has felt her heart bleed at the sight. She is what is called a great lady, but she has looked after you with compassion, as being of her own sex and nature, and the thought of such fallen women has troubled her in her bed. She has resolved to open, at her own expense, a place of refuge very near London, for a small number of females, who without such help, are lost for ever, and to make it a HOME for them. In this Home they will be taught all household work that would be useful to them in a home of their own, and enable them to make it comfortable and happy. In this Home, which stands in a pleasant country lane, and where each may have her little flower-garden, if she pleases, they will be treated with the greatest kindness, will lead an active, cheerful, healthy life, will learn many things it is profitable and good to know, and, being entirely removed from all who have any knowledge of their past career, will begin life afresh, and be able to win a good name and character. And because it is not the lady's wish that these young women should be shut out from the world, after they have repented and have learned how to do their duty there, and because it is her wish and object that they may be restored to society—a comfort to themselves and it—they will be supplied with every means, when some time

shall have elapsed, and their conduct shall have fully proved their earnestness and reformation, to go abroad, where, in a distant country, they may become the faithful wives of honest men, and live and die in peace

I have been told that those who see you daily in this place, believe that there are virtuous inclinations lingering within you, and that you may be reclaimed. I offer the Home I have described in these few words, to you.

But, consider well before you accept it As you are to pass from the gate of this Prison to a perfectly new life, where all the means of happiness from which you are now shut out, are opened brightly to you, so remember, on the other hand, that you must have the strength to leave behind you, all old habits You must resolve to set a watch upon yourself, and to be firm in your control over yourself, and to restrain yourself, to be patient, gentle, persevering, and good-tempered Above all things, to be truthful in every word you speak Do this, and all the rest is easy But you must solemnly remember that if you enter this Home without such constant resolutions, you will occupy, unworthily and uselessly, the place of some other unhappy girl, now wandering and lost; and that her ruin, no less than your own, will be upon your head, before Almighty God, who

A REMARKABLE APPEAL

knows the secrets of our breasts, and Christ, who died upon the Cross, to save us.

In case there should be anything you wish to know, or any question you would like to ask, about this Home, you have only to say so, and every information shall be given to you. Whether you accept it or reject it, think of it. If you awake in the silence and solitude of night, think of it then. If any remembrance ever comes into your mind of any time when you were innocent and very different, think of it then. If you should be softened by a moment's recollection of any tenderness or affection you have ever felt, or that has ever been shown to you, or of any kind word that has ever been spoken to you, think of it then. If ever your poor heart is moved to feel, truly, what you might have been, and what you are, oh think of it then, and consider what you may be yet!

Believe me that I am, indeed,

YOUR FRIEND.

Dickens's visit to Switzerland did not interfere with his active interest in Miss Burdett-Coutts's Home for fallen women. The Duke referred to in the letter of July 25th was Charles Gordon Lennox, fifth Duke of Richmond Greville, while admitting that he had "a certain measure of understanding," adds that he was "prejudiced,

narrow-minded, illiterate, and ignorant, good-looking, good-humoured, and unaffected, tedious, prolix, unassuming, and a duke."

ROSEMONT, LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND.

Twenty Fifth June 1846.

... This is an odd little house, which I think might be easily put into the great hall of our old Genoese Palazzo—bodily. It stands in the midst of beautiful grounds, on the slope of the Hill going down to the Lake—and the blue waters thereof, and the whole range of mountains, lie in front of the windows. . I have a study, something larger than a Plate Warmer, opening into a Balcony and commanding a lovely view. I am contemplating terrific and tremendous industry—am mightily resolved to begin the book in numbers without delay—and have already begun to look the little Christmas Volume in its small red face, though I hardly know it by sight yet.

ROSEMONT, LAUSANNE

Saturday Twenty Fifth July. 1846

.. Your two objections to my sketch of a plan, I wish to offer half a dozen words upon.

1st As to Marriage. I do not propose to put

CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE HOME

that hope before them as the immediate end and object to be gained, but assuredly to keep it in view as the possible consequence of a sincere, true, practical repentance, and an altered life.

A kind of penitence is bred in our prisons and purgatories just now, which is a very pretty penitence inside the walls, but fades into nothing when it comes into contact with worldly realities.

In the generality of cases, it is almost impossible to produce a penitence which shall stand the wear and tear of this rough world, without Hope—worldly hope—the hope of at one time or other recovering something like the lost station I would make this Hope, however faint and afar off it might be, exactly the one that out of the asylum and without its aid, seemed (and was) impossible of attainment.

2^{dly} With regard to Temptation I would simply ask you to consider whether we do not, all of us, in our stations, tempt our fellow creatures at every turn. Whether there is a merchant in London who does not hourly expose his servants to strong temptation. Whether a night or morning ever comes when you do not tempt your butler with a hundred times the worth of his year's wages. Whether there are not at the Banking House in the Strand, many young men whose lives are one exposure to, and resistance of, temptation. And whether it is not a christian

act to say to such unfortunate creatures as you purpose, by God's blessing, to reclaim, "Test for yourselves the reality of your repentance and your power of resisting temptation, while you are *here*, and before you are in the world outside, to fall before it!"

Now about *Punch* I have no influence whatever with that Potentate save such as may lie in its being owned by my printers, and in my having a personal knowledge of some of its principal contributors. You may guess how powerful my influence is, when I tell you that during my stage management of the amateur Play, I spoke to the gentleman most prominent among them, about that very Duke—more than once—and said that I believed him to be an excellent creature. That I had myself received the most remarkable courtesy from him, and that I knew that in his treatment of his Governess, and of others about him, he was a bright example to three fourths of the middle classes. The gentleman to whom I spoke, laughed about it, and said that there was no ill nature in their jokes at his expence, and that they merely jested at peculiarities of speech and manner that were generally notorious. After this conversation, or about the same time, however, the Duke happened to make a very unfortunate and apparently unfeeling, speech, about the diseased potatoes

This, *Punch* resented and took in great dudgeon. Between ourselves, I really hardly know how they could have done otherwise, for it was especially ill-timed and ill-chosen. But both on the occasions to which I have referred, and since, I have championed him strongly, and in the same quarter. And, as I have already said, you may guess from this, how great my influence is. I thoroughly agree with you in all you say about him, but I never wrote, or stayed the writing, of, a word in *Punch*, and am not in the least degree in his confidence or councils.

Writing to Miss Burdett-Coutts on October 5th, 1846, Dickens said

"... I do not wish Mrs Brown would be ill again, but I wish she would do something, which would lead to her suggesting another character to me, as serviceable as Mrs Gamp!"

The prototype of Mrs Gamp was a nurse employed for a short time by Miss Burdett-Coutts during the illness of her friend Mrs Brown at 1 Stratton Street, Piccadilly. The description of her proceedings given by the two ladies fired the imagination of Dickens, with the result that

one of the most extraordinary characters ever created by a writer, with her attendant satellites, Betsy Prig and the mythical Mrs Harris, were added to the treasures of English fiction. When *Martin Chuzzlewit* appeared in book form, it was dedicated to Miss Burdett-Coutts, "with the true and earnest regard of the author."

The deep interest which Dickens continued to take in the Home is shown by the letters of October and November, 1847.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Thursday Night, Twenty Eighth October 1847.

. . I am in a state of great anxiety to talk to you about your "Home" (that is the name I propose to give it) with which I have been very busy for some time, and which will be ready for the reception of its inmates, please God, on Saturday fortnight

I have taken some pains to find out the dispositions and natures of any individual we take; and I think I know them pretty well, and may be able to give the Matron some useful foreknowledge of them, and to exercise some personal influence with them in case of need. A most extraordinary and mysterious study it is, but interesting and touching in the extreme

I think it well to say to you that I have avoided Macconochie's ideas, as they hardly seemed (or

I fancied so) to meet with your full approval, and as they were perhaps unsuited to so small an establishment. The design is simply, as you and I agreed, to appeal to them by means of affectionate kindness and trustfulness—but firmly too. To improve them by education and example—establish habits of the most rigid order, punctuality, and neatness—but to make as great a variety in their daily lives as their daily lives will admit of—and to render them an innocently cheerful Family while they live together there. On the cheerfulness and kindness all our hopes rest.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Wednesday, Third November 1847.

I have great faith in the soundness of your opinions in reference to the religious instruction, knowing you to be full of that enlarged consideration for the special circumstances under which it is to be administered in this case, without which nothing hopeful or useful can be done. I trust that those enlightenments to which you refer, are to be found in the *New Testament*? I am confident that harm is done to this class of minds by the injudicious use of the Old—and I am hardly less confident that I could shew you how, in talking the subject over.

The expediency of explaining to them that

the rules of the Establishment may alter, I greatly doubt. For this reason—If we did so, they would immediately conceive that we did not know what we were about, and that we were experimentalizing, which would desperately shake their trust in us. Such rules as we agree upon in the outset will be known only to the Superintendents and ourselves. They will not be told to the Inmates. There will be a certain daily routine which they will be called upon to observe. If we see fit to alter it, it will be altered as a matter of course, I should say—explaining to them beforehand the why and wherefore. But if the establishment worked well, I would strongly counsel you not to try experiments. My belief is that nothing would unsettle them so much, or render their staying with us so doubtful—recollect, that we address a peculiar and strangely-made character.

There is this objection to the address of the chaplain to each person individually. It would decidedly involve the risk of their refusing to come to us. The extraordinary monotony of the refuges and asylums now existing, and the almost insupportable extent to which they carry the words and forms of religion, is known to no order of people so well as to these women, and they have that exaggerated dread of it, and that preconceived sense of their inability to bear

DISPLIST OF CLERGYMEN

it, which the reports of those who have refused to say in them have bred in their minds I am afraid if they were thus taken to task, and especially by a clergyman, they would be alarmed—would say "it's the old story after all, and we have mistaken the sort of place It's better to say at once that we are not fit for it"—and that so we should lose them That they are sensible of the sinfulness and degradation of their lives—that nothing else but that, has been impressed upon them by society since they began those lives—is, to say the least, reasonably discreet And he must be a very remarkably discreet and gentle man indeed, who could execute this difficult task, without rendering them apprehensive of what was to follow

That their past lives should never be referred to at the Home, there can be no doubt I should say that any such reference on the part of the Superintendent would be an instance of blind mistake that in itself would render her dismissal necessary.

The temptation that has occurred to you, in pursuance of Macconochie's idea, suggests this consideration—that it is one to which in all probability they will never be exposed abroad, and that it is a very severe one If a girl goes out by herself, where is she to go? Every one she knows now is, to a greater or less extent,

an infamous associate, and suffering her to go out by herself would be to expose her to the arts and temptations and recognitions of fifty such—even supposing that her old habits and her new freedom didn't lead her among them, it is likely some of them would come in her way, and her very decency might give them the advantage, as by inducing her to go away with them in the first instance, rather than be jeered and mocked in the open streets. I propose that, in the country, about the house, they shall constantly go out in two or threes with Mrs Holdsworth. I would, as they advanced in their training and shewed decided improvement, trust them with keys, and with many little offices within-doors that would test their self denial . .

One great point that I try to bear in mind continually, and which I hope the clergyman will steadily remember, is, that these unfortunate creatures are to be *Tempted* to virtue. They cannot be dragged, driven, or frightened. You originate this great work for the salvation of the women who come into that Home, and I hold it to be the sacred duty of every one who assists you in it, first *to consider how best to get them there, and how best to keep them there*. Every other consideration should fade before these two, because every other consideration follows upon them, and is included in them, and is impractic-

“TARNISHED IMAGES OF GOD”

able without them. It is for this vital reason that a knowledge of human nature as it shews itself in these tarnished and battered images of God—and a patient consideration for it—and a determined putting of the question to one's self, not only whether this or that piece of instruction or correction be in itself good and true, but how it can be best adapted to the state in which we find these people, and the necessity we are under of dealing gently with them, lest they should run head long back on their own destruction—are the great, merciful, christian thoughts for such an enterprize, and form the only spirit in which it can be successfully undertaken. Do you not feel with me that this must be kept steadily in view, and that a chaplain imbued with this feeling in the outset, is the only minister for the place? . .

I most entirely agree with you that it is right they should feel perfectly free before going abroad. If this system hold (and I have a faith in its doing so, simply because it is the system of Christianity, and nothing more or less) I believe they *will* feel perfectly free, when that times comes. But we can examine into this, and devise for it, leisurely. It has occurred to me that it would be an admirable means of promoting friendly and affectionate feelings among them, to give them to understand that

no one should ever be sent abroad alone. It would be a beautiful thing, and would give us a wonderful power over them, if they would form strong attachments among themselves. To say nothing of the encouragement and support they would be to one another in a foreign country.

My dear Miss Coutts, you will attribute my earnestness to the true cause—the unspeakable interest I have in a design fraught with such great consequences, and the knowledge I have (if I have any knowledge at all) of these sad aspects of humanity, and their workings—when I again refer to that indispensable necessity of remembering the formed character that is to be addressed, and of considering everything that is addressed to it, not with reference to itself alone, but in connexion with its adaptability to the nature, sufferings, and whole experience of the objects of your benevolence. In proportion as the details of any one of these young lives would be strange and difficult to a good man who had kept away from such knowledge, so the best man in the world could never make his way to the truth of these people, unless he were content to win it very slowly, and with the nicest perception always present to him, of the results engendered in them by what they have gone through. Wrongly addressed, they are

AN ACCIDENT AT BROADSTAIRS

certain to deceive The greatest anxiety I feel in connexion with this scheme—it is a greater one than any that arises out of my sense of responsibility to you, though that is not slight—is, that the clergyman with whom I hope I am to act as one confiding in him and perfectly confided in, should be not only a well-intentioned man, as I believe most clergymen would be, but one of the kindest, most considerate, most judicious, and least exacting of his order

BROADSTAIRS, KENT.

Thursday, Tenth August 1848

... We had an accident here yesterday, which might have been a very bad one I have a pretty little pony, nearly thoroughbred, who is not vicious, but requires great care in the driving Mrs Dickens, in a little phaeton which this animal draws, set off for Margate to meet me, under the coachmanship of our footman At the top of a hill the pony made a sudden start, and the man instantly jumped out (he says he was thrown out, but it could not have been so) leaving her galloping down a steep hill, with the reins wound round the wheel, and his mistress astounding the whole Isle of Thanet with her screams However, she kept her seat and the pony plunging over a steep bank, broke the shafts and tumbled down on her side without

upsetting the carriage! A lady and gentleman living near, who were driving by in their carriage, got Mrs Dickens out, and sent for some wine and so forth, and took her home to their house, where the man was carried too, and where (to my unspeakable astonishment) I was borne off to see them, when I landed from the boat. She is none the worse, I hope, for the fright, but the man is greatly cut and bruised from head to heel, and the surgeon is afraid he may be lamed, from the injury done to some leading sinews of his legs. I am going to take the pony to the scene of the disaster this morning, where I shall try to cure her of such freaks for the future.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

First November 1848. Wednesday afternoon

I want to ask your kind assistance in getting a highly esteemed and valued old servant of mine, who went abroad with us—the Brave courier of my little Italian book—into St George's Hospital

His case, the surgeon says, is distinctly admissible there. It would be also admissible at the Brompton Hospital for diseases of the chest. That institution is under an old obligation to me, and they are very ready and willing to take him in, but the bed he is to occupy (if he should

live to go there) is not likely to be vacant for the next two or three months.

I enclose the medical description of his case, on which I have it much at heart to get him into St George's forthwith I don't know how to set about it. It has occurred to me that perhaps you may have some direct power of nominating him as a patient, and that if you have not, Mr. Brown¹ (on whose good-feeling I know I may rely) will help me with his advice.

Pray forgive me troubling you I have the deepest interest in the matter. He is a most faithful, affectionate, and devoted man He is dreadfully changed from a fine handsome fellow, in a very short time His doctor urgently recommends his being got into a hospital where he will never be left alone (he is in a poor little lodging now) and I must accomplish it if it can be done

The grandson of Henry Goldsmith (Oliver Goldsmith's brother) referred to in the next letter was Lieutenant Charles Goldsmith (1795-1854), who later held the rank of Commander in the Navy His elder brother Hugh Colvill Goldsmith (1789-1841) was also a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and died at sea in the West Indies.

¹ Dr William Brown

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE,

Twenty Ninth March 1849.

As I believe you will give me credit for being very slow to intrude upon your generosity, I will say nothing more in defence of this application

There has come to my knowledge a case, in which if you should feel disposed to render any assistance, I can answer for its being well bestowed. The object is, to help the family of the grandson of that Henry Goldsmith to whom Oliver dedicated the *Traveller*, and who is supposed to have been the original of some parts of Mr. Primrose's character in the *Vicar of Wakefield*—a book of which I think it is not too much to say that it has perhaps done more good in the world, and instructed more kinds of people in virtue, than any other fiction ever written

This grandson has six sons and a daughter. On an income never exceeding two hundred a year, and for a great part of his life never exceeding a hundred and sixty, he has contrived to bring them up well (those that are grown) and to get two of them abroad as sailors, and another into the Naval School. He is a lieutenant in the Navy himself, and now in command of a Revenue Cruiser, but the expenses of his family, and in particular the having borrowed £50 for the outfit of one of his sons, have in-

volved him in temporary distress; and unless he can clear himself, it is probable that he will be seriously damaged at the Admiralty

I have a letter by me from his wife, which is very plainly and pathetically written, and which convinces me that lasting good may be done to a very deserving man by a little money. A private subscription among some literary men is the only thing that occurs to me, as a way of raising the whole sum borrowed (the least amount, I take it, that would do him real service) and if you feel yourself justified in aiding it, I shall be very heartily sensible of your assistance

Dickens was also warmly interested in the many efforts made by Miss Burdett-Coutts for the advancement of education

BROADSTAIRS

Friday Evening, Sixth September 1850

It would be a great thing for all of us, if more who are powerfully concerned with Education, thought as you do, of the imaginative faculty. Precisely what you say in your note, is always in my mind, in that connexion. The three best houses for children's books, are Arthur Hall, Paternoster Row—Grant and Griffiths,

Saint Paul's Churchyard—Darton and Co. Holborn Hill Tegg of Cheapside, also published a charming collection of stories, called *The Child's Fairy Library*—in which I had great delight on the voyage to America.

BROADSTAIRS

Wednesday Twenty Third October. 1850.

I have just finished *Copperfield* and don't know whether to laugh or cry . . . I have an idea of wandering somewhere for a day or two—to Rochester, I think, where I was a small boy—to get all this fortnight's work out of my head, but I shall be at home soon.

The comedy written by Lord Lytton was *Not So Bad As We Seem*. It was played for the first time at Devonshire House, London, on the 16th of May, 1851, before Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and a large audience. This and other performances were in aid of "The Guild of Literature and Art," an object on behalf of which Dickens and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton (afterwards Lord Lytton) devoted many efforts for several years. Their aim was to raise an endowment, the funds of which "should not be mere charity, but should combine something of both pension-list and college-lectureship, without the drawbacks of either" (Forster, Book VI,

Chap. V.) In a speech at the time Dickens said, "I have just embarked in a design to soothe the rugged way of young labourers both in literature and the fine arts, and to soften, but by no eleemosynary means, the declining years of meritorious age. If it prosper, as I hope it will, and I know it ought, there will one day in England be an honour where there is now a reproach, and a future race of men of letters will gratefully remember that it originated in the sympathies, and was made practicable by the generosity, of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton." By performances of Lytton's comedy, of Wilkie Collins' *The Frozen Deep*, of a farce by Dickens, public dinners and other means, a very considerable sum was raised—how much cannot be ascertained. A freehold site of some three acres at the entrance to Stevenage was given by Lytton, and here was built in 1865, under the supervision of Alfred Darbyshire, acting as honorary architect, a large residence which was divided into three separate houses, each with its own hall door and staircase. This was an asylum for members of "The Guild of Literature and Art." From the first the scheme appears to have been a failure. The houses often remained empty, and with the death of the last trustee the property became vested in the Council of the Royal Literary Fund, who on June 27th, 1901, sold the building and the ground by auction. The property was purchased as a private residence by Mrs. Stanford, by whom it is still occupied, though the three houses have now been converted into two, and the building, which was originally

known as The Guild, has been renamed Woodlands and Oakfield.

KNUTSFORD LODGE, GREAT MALVERN

Twentieth March 1851. Thursday

.. I send you enclosed, the first proof of the design which Bulwer and I have projected, and for which he has written the Comedy. It is still susceptible of many little improvements and explanations which we are gradually getting into it. The Duke of Devonshire has taken it up (on my shewing it to him) in a most generous and noble manner, and we are going to play the Comedy for the first time, at his House, in the last week in April. On which occasion the Queen is to be invited, and I don't know how much money made.

The maze of bewilderment into which I have got myself with carpenters, painters, tailors, machinists, and others, in consequence—to say nothing of two nights every week when the whole company are drilled for five hours, the undersigned presiding—or of this trifling addition to my usual occupations—is of the most entangled description, but, if I could help to set right what is wrong here and what I see every day to be so unhappily wrong, I should be munificently recompensed

OBJECTION TO HIS ACTING

GREAT MALVERN

Sunday, Twenty Third March 1851

. I have perceived a dim shadow of your mysterious objection to my acting, before now Yet I hope you will go to this Play, consoling your mind with the belief that we have on former occasions done a great deal of good by it, and that there is no one else whom these men would allow to hold them together, or to whose direction they would good-humouredly and with perfect confidence yield themselves It was in the circumstance of Bulwer's being so much struck and surprised by this union when we played at his house a few months ago, that this scheme originated For he said, "this is a great power that has grown up about you, out of a winter-night's amusement, and do let us try to use it for the lasting service of our order "

You will not find it like any other amateur Plays, I think You will be impressed by the general intelligence and good sense And you will find a certain neatness in it which I should compare with the French stage, if you were not so profoundly English!

As to the mournful spectacle of your friend upon the boards, I can only ask you to do your best to forget him If I thought that deeply-anchored objection were capable of being argued down, I should press you, darkly to reveal it.

But I have no such belief, for I think you are in your way as obstinate as—Mrs. Brown—I can't say more

The ironic references in the next extract refer to the second Earl Granville (1815-91), and to his wife Lord Granville, who took a prominent part in the promotion of the Great Exhibition of 1851, was one of the deputation of commissioners who visited France in August of that year on the invitation of the municipality of Paris to celebrate the success of the Exhibition. "He spoke French like a Parisian, with a slight court accent, recalling the *ancien régime*, and his personal influence did much to promote the *entente cordiale*." There was probably no one more unlikely to enter the French Chamber of Peers as the first representative of the rights of women than Lady Granville (d. 1860), who was Maria Louisa, only child and heiress of Emeric Joseph, Duc de Dalberg, widow of Sir Ferdinand Acton, of Aldenham, Shropshire, and mother of the first Lord Acton, the historian. The exchange of effusive sentiments at Paris appears to have caused Dickens no little amusement.

BROADSTAIRS, KENT

Seventeenth August 1851

. I begin to be pondering afar off, a new book. Violent restlessness, and vague ideas of

going I don't know where, I don't know why, are the present symptoms of the disorder

I understand Lord Granville is to be made the next President of the French Republic Have you heard it? also that Lady Granville is to go into the French Chamber of Peers, as the first representative of the Rights of Women—and that the Lord Mayor wants to be naturalized as a French subject This looks bad for England.

Moved by Dickens's repeated descriptions of the terrible poverty and overcrowding in parts of the East End of London, Miss Burdett-Coutts visited with Dickens one of the most squalid districts, known as Nova Scotia Gardens, a name in which there lurked a fine irony It was here that she decided to erect one of the first great blocks of industrial dwellings put up in London, with the result that Columbia Square, affording accommodation for two hundred families, or about a thousand persons, was opened in 1862 Needless to say, the scheme enlisted Dickens's warmest support

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Sunday Eighteenth April 1852

It is a very good thing to try several descriptions of houses, but I have no doubt

myself (after long consideration of the subject) that the large houses are best. You never can, for the same money, offer anything like the same advantages in small houses. It is *not* desirable to encourage any small carpenter or builder who has a few pounds to invest, to run up small dwelling houses. If they had been discouraged long ago, London would be an immeasurably healthier place than it can be made in scores of years to come. If you go into any common outskirts of the town now and see the advancing army of brick and mortar laying waste the country fields and shutting out the air, you cannot fail to be struck by the consideration that if large buildings had been erected for the working people, instead of the absurd and expensive separate walnut shells in which they live, London would have been about a third of its present size, and every family would have had a country walk miles nearer to their own door. Besides this, men would have been nearer to their work—would not have had to dine at public houses—there would have been thicker walls of separation and better means of separation than you can ever give (except at a preposterous cost) in small tenements—and they would have had gas, water, drainage, and a variety of other humanizing things which you *can't* give them so well in little houses. Further,

LARGE HOUSES VERSUS SMALL

in little houses, you must keep them near the ground, and you cannot by any possibility afford such sound and wholesome foundations (remedying this objection) in little houses as in large ones. The example of large houses appears to me, in all respects, (always supposing their locality to be a great place like London) far better than any example you can set by small houses, and the compensation you give for any overgrown shadow they may cast upon a street at certain hours of the day is out of all proportion to that drawback.

I know everybody at Manchester, and in most of those places. But I think the people for the suggestion-paper are people connected with Railways passing through remote Yorkshire Moors, where they have had to frame schools and churches, and establish an orderly system of society out of the strangest disorder—as in one case in Yorkshire, now, where a Tunnel has been making for some years. Also large iron-masters—of whom there are some notable cases—who have proceeded on the self-supporting principle, and have done wonders with their workpeople. Also other manufacturers in isolated places who have awakened to find themselves in the midst of a mass of workpeople going headlong to destruction, and have stopped the current, and quite turned it by establishing

decent houses, paying schools, savings banks, little libraries, etc. Several of these instances come into my mind as I write this, and I have no doubt we could get the results of such experience by merely asking for them.

The Lady Lovelace who sent for Dickens when she was dying was Augusta Ada Noel-Byron, Lord Byron's only child, by his disastrous marriage with Miss Milbanke

"Ada! Sole daughter of my house and heart."

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III

The comedy of which Miss Burdett-Coutts did not approve was Lytton's *Not So Bad As We Seem* (mentioned in the letter of March 20, 1851), and Dickens's farce was *Mr. Nightingale's Diary*, in which Dickens played the part of the old lighthouse-keeper, and was compared by Carlyle "to the famous figure in Nicholas Poussin's Bacchanalian Dance" in the picture in the National Gallery

DERBY

Wednesday Twenty Fifth August 1852

. The night before I left town (last Saturday) I had a note from Lord Lovelace to tell me that Lady Lovelace was dying, and that the death of

the child in Dombey had been so much in her thoughts and had soothed her so, that she wished to see me once more if I could be found. I went, and sat with her alone for some time. It was very solemn and sad, but her fortitude was quite surprising, and her conviction that all the agony she has suffered (which has been very great) had some good design in the goodness of God, impressed me very much. She wished to live till next Saturday, to see one of her boys who is absent. I fear she may not have that natural hope realized.

The comedy you don't approve of, goes very well now I have reduced it into three acts I wish you could see my farce It is very droll and pleasant, and puts all the people into such good humour that they cannot express it sufficiently

The references to the death and funeral of the Duke of Wellington explain themselves

The paragraph about Westminster can only refer to the great religious and educational work Miss Burdett-Coutts had undertaken in that part of the ancient City adjoining Vincent Square St Stephen's Church had been consecrated June 24th, 1850, when the altar-cloth was given by the Duke of Wellington, who also presented to the church a sixteenth-century silk curtain taken from the tent of Tippoo Sahib at the storming of Seringapatam The schools for boys, girls and

infants adjoined St. Stephen's Church, and contained a large picture by Marshall Claxton (1813-81), of Christ blessing little children.

DOVER,

Tuesday Night Fourteenth September 1852

I have just heard of what you will have been long prepared for, but what I fear will cause you, notwithstanding, some natural distress. I was walking to Walmer this afternoon, and little thought that the great old man was dying or dead. He had been a steady friend to an uncle of Mrs Dickens who was Colonel of Engineers here, and his son left word a little while ago, while we were at dinner, that the Duke was dead.

I believe that what you write about Westminster is the whole truth and force of that subject, and that there is no better way of going good, or of preparing the great mass of mankind to think of the great doctrines of Our Saviour. If I were to try to tell you what I foresee from your lending your aid to what is so particularly and plainly christian with no fear of mistake, your modest way of looking at what you do would scarcely believe me. But you will live to see what comes of it, and that will be—here—your great reward.

I felt, when I came back, that I had so much to do with *Bleak House* that it was not safe for me to contemplate doing nothing next Wednesday.

FUNERAL OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

The opinions expressed in the following letters regarding the Duke of Wellington's funeral were stated with equal cogency in articles in *Household Words*. These were followed by an article in the issue for November 27th, 1852, entitled "Trading in Death," in which, after denouncing the barbarous show and expense of State funerals and all such customs, Dickens quoted a large number of advertisements which had appeared in *The Times* and other newspapers offering for sale seats to view the funeral, autograph letters, and locks of the Duke's hair. It was added that if all such advertisements that had appeared were collected they would fill an entire number of *Household Words*.

DOVER,

Thursday, Twenty Third September 1852

The whole Public seems to me to have gone mad about the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. I think it a grievous thing—a relapse into semi-barbarous practices—an almost ludicrous contrast to the calm good sense and example of responsibility set by the Queen Dowager—a pernicious corruption of the popular mind, just beginning to awaken from the long dream of inconsistencies, monstrosities, horrors and ruinous expenses, that has beset all classes of society in connexion with Death—and a folly sure to miss its object and to be soon attended by a strong re-action on the memory of the illustrious man so *mis*respected.

But to say anything about it now, or to hope to leaven with any grain of sense such a mass of wrong-doing, would be utterly useless. Afterwards, I shall try to present the sense of the case in *Household Words*. At present, I think I might as well whistle to the sea.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE *Thurs November 1852*

. . . I am quite vexed about the State Funeral. I think it is altogether wrong as regards the memory of the Duke, and at least equally wrong in the Court estimate it implies of the People. The nonsense of the Heralds' College and Lord Chamberlain absurdities, keep his own soldiers away, the only real links of sympathy the public could have found in it are carefully filed off; and a vulgar holiday, with a good deal of business for the thieves and the public houses, will be the chief result.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Friday Nineteenth November, 1852

. In the matter of the Household Narrative, I think, on looking back to the previous numbers, that there is nothing to be done, as to the Duke's memory—unless there be anything that you would *like* to add about his character. If you will send

DISLIKE OF STATE FUNERALS

me anything, of course I will take care to append it in the right place. I came home yesterday in time to write an article for the next No. of *Household Words*—which I had kept open for the purpose, and which is now at press, of necessity,—objecting to the whole State Funeral, and shewing why. I will send you a proof—tomorrow night, I hope—thinking you may like to read it. The military part of the show, was very fine. If it had been an ordinary Funeral of a great commander, it might have been impressive. I suppose for forms of ugliness, horrible combinations of color, hideous motion, and general failure, there never was such a work achieved as the Car

It does not appear possible to identify the placid doctor whom Dickens felt inclined to take by the throat, or the Mrs. Brayne whose work would not bear much exposure to light, or the photograph of Dickens which resulted from the interview between himself and the sun

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Friday Twenty Third October 1852

Your description of the placid Doctor makes me laugh in a most ridiculous manner whenever I think of it. I always feel inclined to take him by the throat and squeeze the words

he *won't* say and *won't* be helped to (for if you suggest them he positively refuses to take them but goes floundering on in the profoundest contentment), out of him by force. He is an excellent creature, however, and knows what he is about far better than he seems to—which is not saying much for him, but I mean a great deal more

We are greatly relieved, and very glad, to hear that Mrs Brown continues to mend I have effected and am effecting, several small improvements in the internal arrangements here, which I shall hope to hear both your and her commendation of by the glow of a winter fire I bought at Boulogne, a little figure for my study chimney-piece *which was the sign of a tobacconist's shop*, and which, for the most grotesque absurdity, I consider unrivalled

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Thirtieth October 1852

... I went out yesterday to Fulham, and occasioned the most frightful consternation in Auckland Cottage by unexpectedly appearing in the rain A large young family fled from the back parlor, on a visitor being announced, and took refuge (with their mother) at the top of the stairs—where they stood, as I saw from the

A "BRIGHT-EYED OLD LADY"

passage. Like so many Ostriches—with their heads hidden, but their legs plainly visible: and I think I never saw so many legs listening at once, as while I enquired for Mrs. Brayne. Being shewn into the wanted back parlor. I was there presently confronted by the wrong Mrs. Brayne, a muscular lady with very large bones, to whom I timidly intimated my profound conviction that she was not the ancient artist you had described to me. She replied, "No doubt it was her mother-in-law I wanted" and, withdrawing, sent in a little bright-eyed old lady in a grey and mulberry-colored knitted poke, whom I perceived to be the right Mrs. Brayne. She shewed me the copy. I apprehend there is not much choice of a frame for it must be fixed in a case to shut up, or it will not bear much exposure to the light. I therefore advised her to make the gilt fat frame within the case something wider than usual, and pointed out to her another slight alteration in the usual measurement of such things, which increases the effect. The whole to be fixed in a morocco case. This, I settled she might proceed to do, after Tuesday; if in the meantime she heard nothing to the contrary. . . .

I think of doing something about the Thames Police, and had some of the Tollkeepers at Waterloo Bridge at the office yesterday to put some ques-

tions to them about their experience of suicide. Their answers were rather curious, almost all the attempts are by women—a man, quite a rarity.

The Mr Stone who was described as hovering with satisfaction round the photograph of Dickens, was Frank Stone, A R A, a popular English painter in both water-colours and oils (1800-59). He was a friend of Dickens, and one of the four artists (Augustus Egg, John Leech, George Cruikshank), associated with amateur theatrical performances given for charitable purposes by Dickens in Manchester and Liverpool in 1847. As the net receipts fell short by £100 of the sum it was desired to raise, Dickens proposed to increase the benefit fund by the publication of a little *jeu d'esprit*, in the form of a history of the trip, with illustrations by the four artists, written by Mrs. Gamp (as an eye-witness), inscribed to Mrs Harris, and edited by Charles Dickens. It was to be a new "Piljam's Projiss." The project, alas! was not realized, as the artists did not respond, but there is a delightfully amusing fragment of the letterpress by Dickens, given in the sixth book of Forster's *Life*, including the following friendly caricature of Stone and Egg: "There," he says, alluding to a fine-looking, portly gentleman, with a face like an amiable full moon, and a short, mild gentleman, with a pleasant smile, "is two more of our artists, Mrs G, well beknowed at the Royal Academy, as sure

INTERVIEW WITH THE SUN

as stones is stones and eggs is eggs " Mr. Frank Stone was the father of Marcus Stone, R A.

Christmas Day 1852.

I cannot resist the temptation I feel to send you the result of the interview between myself and the sun. I am so anxious that you should like it if you can It came home last night, and Mr Stone has been prowling about it and hovering round it this morning with such intense satisfaction, that I suppose it must have something good in it I don't pretend to such a knowledge of my own face, as I claim to have of other people's faces.

BOULOGNE

Sunday, Tenth July, 1853

. I look forward to shewing you, here, the most ridiculous suite of children's rooms ever imagined—an absurdity of which I am quite proud to be the temporary owner—and a very good one in practice too

CHATEAU DES MOULINEAUX, BOULOGNE.

Eighteenth July 1853, Monday

It has been blowing great guns here—raining great water-spouts—hailing sugar loaves, and going all up and down the glass in four and

twenty hours. We are at present expecting snow.

Mrs Warner (1804-54) was Mary Amelia Huddart, the daughter of a Dublin chemist. After a distinguished career on the stage, she was stricken with cancer, and became a hopeless invalid. She had married Robert William Warner, the landlord of the Wrekin Tavern, Broad Court, Bow Street, a place of resort for actors and literary men. In 1853, partly through the fault of her husband, she went through the insolvency court. A fund, to which Queen Victoria and Miss Burdett-Coutts contributed, was raised, and a benefit performance at Sadlers' Wells brought her £150.

BOULOGNE, CHATEAU DES MOULINEAUX

Wednesday, Twentieth July, 1853

I dare say you can easily call to mind Mrs Warner the actress. Will you read the enclosed portion of a note I received (in a parcel from London) from Mr Macready, only this morning. It is just within the bounds of possibility that you may have some power of nomination somewhere, that might be well bestowed on such a case. But I need not say (of all people) that I know what a slender chance there is of such a thing.

LETTER FROM MACREADY

In acknowledging the sum sent to him for Mrs. Warner's benefit, Macready, writing to Miss Burdett-Coutts from Sherborne, on July 23rd, 1853, said

You will I trust, dear Madam, excuse me for this departure from the ceremonious terms, in which I ought perhaps to acknowledge the letter, I have just received from you but, under the feelings it has excited in me, I really cannot restrict myself to that cold formality, which is ordinarily considered the language of respect. I would wish you to believe, how deeply I have been affected by your goodness, and how truly I honor that genuine benevolence, so ready in you to anticipate affliction's prayer But in your own consciousness you have your own recompence, and that, which is due to the most faithful stewardship of the Almighty's earthly blessings must be yours

I shall by this same post convey to Mrs Warner the consolation of your letter, and I can well judge, what must be her emotions of gratitude to you, and also to our excellent friend, Mr Charles Dickens for his kind mediation in her favor

There are three or four answers, for which I am waiting, before I make up the arrangements for the completion of the girl's education, but in

the meantime she will return to school, and in due course, I will, with your permission, forward you the account of what has been, and is proposed to be, done.

I shall probably hear either from yourself, or through Mr Dickens, of your final decision in regard to the boy in the meantime, regretting that I can but so imperfectly express the sentiments of grateful respect, with which I am penetrated by your goodness, I remain, dear Madam,

Your's most faithfully,

W C. MACREADY.

The book which Dickens had just finished was
Bleak House

BOULOGNE,

Saturday, Twenty Seventh August 1853

I have just finished my book (very prettily indeed, I hope) and am in the first drowsy lassitude of having done so I should be lying in the sunshine by the hour together, if there were such a thing In its absence I prowl about in the wind and rain Last night was the most tremendous I ever heard for a storm of both I fear there will be sad shipwrecks in the newspapers a few days hence

. . The Birmingham people are arranging those readings I promised to give them They

LONDON OUT OF THE SEASON

expect to get five hundred pounds for their new Institution (a splendid idea of a Mechanics' Athenæum) therefrom. I am going to read there three nights in the Christmas week—to two thousand working people only, on the Friday—the *Christmas Carol*. You heard the beginning of *Bleak House*. I wish (and did wish very heartily) you had been here the night before last, to hear the end.

OFFICE OF HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

16 WELLINGTON STREET NORTH

Friday Eighth September 1853

Your account of Vichy gave me a chill from which I have not yet quite recovered. A dim oppressive sense of windy discomfort has been upon me ever since, and I feel inclined to try to warm myself at a bright hard hearted little fireplace which produces nothing but smoke.

I passed your house yesterday, and it looked tremendously dull—if that is any comfort to you. Painters were at work in Mr Brown's,¹ and a man on a tall thin pair of steps much spotted with whitewash was at work in the middle window of the dining room, according to the usual manner of that class of operative—scraping a little, looking

¹ Dr and Mrs Brown (Miss Meredith) lived next door to the Baroness at 80 Piccadilly

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

about him a great deal, and singing the dreariest song I ever heard. I suppose that part of London never was so empty. In search of two or three little things I wanted for my trip, I went to one of the tailors who lives in Piccadilly. He couldn't bear the silence and had gone to Brighton. I went to another of my tailors who lives in Clifford Street, Bond Street. He had given up business altogether, for the time, and was playing the piano upstairs, surrounded by his family and mignonette boxes. I then went to my hosier's in New Bond Street and found the establishment reduced to two of the least illustrious of the "young men," who were playing at draughts in the back counting house. This is really the experience of a solitary traveller in those regions at eleven o'clock yesterday forenoon.

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX, BULLOGNE

Eighteenth September, 1853

. This place was decorated, three weeks ago, for the Emperor. All the triumphal arches (made of green boughs) have faded, and look exactly as if they were made of tea leaves.

The letter which follows suggests how active a part Dickens was taking in the philanthropic work

of Miss Burdett-Coutts during the years before she secured the services of Mr Wills as her private secretary

I JUNCTION PARADE, BRIGHTON.

Friday Fourth October 1853.

1st Case —Mr. Burgess is a common begging-letter writer—Fourpost bedstead in his room—admirable steak on the fire—handsome wife—two extraordinarily jovial children—shelves, full of glasses, crockery ware, children's toys, &c &c—cupboard full of provender—coals in stock—everything particularly cheerful and cosey It was such a clear case (he was not at home himself, I think must have stepped out to fetch the beer) that I caused enquiry to be made of the Mendicity Society *They know him well, and will send me down a report of his life and career tomorrow*

2nd Case —The lady at Holloway was with her sick husband Everything scrupulously clean—except the husband They were in a back parlor, very briefly furnished She has two additional pupils in her little school, and one other private pupil They have got on up to the present time, but are again so pressed by those small creditors that certain friends of hers have determined in their small way to assist her husband with the few pounds necessary to pay the expenses of

taking the benefit of the Insolvent Act They deplored this with much apparent sincerity, saying that all the creditors, except the baker, were very little tradesmen who would suffer by the loss They estimate their debts at £50. They were very hopeful and quiet—complained of nothing—asked for nothing—and said that on the whole their creditors had been very patient and considerate.

3rd case, I have written a note of enquiry to Mr. Greenhow at Newcastle, and shall probably receive his answer tomorrow.

Augustus Leopold Egg (1816-63) was a well-known genre painter of the time. The other member of the Italian Triumvirate was Wilkie Collins

Miss Burdett-Coutts was evidently staying in Paris, where "Dickens & Co." were to dine with her on their way to Strassburg

"O" was a playful designation for Mrs Brown, Miss Burdett-Coutts's friend and former companion.

BOULOGNE,

Saturday Eighth October. 1853.

. As you kindly contemplate the invasion of your table by the whole Italian Triumvirate, and as I know you will find Mr. Egg very modest

and agreeable, I think I ought to give "Co" the great pleasure you so considerately offer that part of the Firm, as well as "Self" But as we shall not be presentable by your dinner hour on Monday, and as we shall not go on to Strassburg until Wednesday morning, I would propose, if you approve, that we dine with you on *Tuesday*

.. I have a game to shew you, which will interest you if you never saw it. We have been playing it here of an evening, with the greatest success I think it will put our friend O (if you will say as much to her from me) on the alert.

The gentleman with whom the Italian Triviriate spent two days was the Reverend Chauncey Hare Townshend (1798-1868), but it has not been possible to identify the Prince In his youth Mr Townshend had pretensions to being a poet, and in 1817, while at Cambridge, won the Chancellor's Medal for a poem entitled *Jerusalem* He published a volume of poems in 1821, and was the author of other works. An inimitable description of him in his old age is given in Dickens's letter of August 13th, 1856 By his will Mr Townshend left his pictures, scientific collections and a magnificent collection of gems, to the National, now the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a large sum of money to Miss Burdett-Coutts for the furtherance of elementary education Out of this fund was

built the Chauncey Hare Townshend Schools, opened in Rochester Street, Westminster, in 1876. He was one of the dearest friends of Dickens for many years, and when *Great Expectations*, which had appeared as a serial in *All the Year Round*, was issued in book form in 1861, it was inscribed "To Chauncey Hare Townshend" On hearing of his death Dickens wrote "I truly loved him . I never, never, never was better loved by man than I was by him—Good, affectionate, gentle nature" Townshend in his will charged Dickens "to publish without alteration his religious opinions, which he sincerely believed would tend to the happiness of mankind." In a letter dated January 4th, 1869, Dickens explains that to publish without alteration was absolutely impossible, because the opinions were distributed in the strangest fragments through the strangest note-books, pocket-books, slips of paper, and what not Notwithstanding these difficulties, Dickens published Mr. Townshend's religious opinions with an explanatory introduction in 1869 It has not been possible to ascertain that they have been conducive to the happiness of mankind.

HOTEL DE LA VILLA, MILAN.

Tuesday Twenty Fifth October 1853

When I came to reflect at leisure on what the Prince had said at dinner, I felt convinced that he must be under some complicated (and

JOURNEY TO MILAN

I had almost added here, peculiarly Parisian) mistake. Firstly, because travellers crossing the Simplon enter Italy by the Sardinian state, and secondly because travellers crossing the St Gothard not only come direct from the obnoxious Swiss Canton—which in the other case they do not—but enter Italy at once by an Austrian portal. When I got to Lausanne I made enquiries whether Austria interposed any difficulties in the way of English travellers entering Italy by the Simplon. Nobody knew, or had ever heard of any such thing. The Courier of the Mail, who had just come across, utterly rejected the idea, saying that they took passengers, and passed and met travelling carriages, every day. Thus confirmed, I resolved to come by the Simplon—and did. We crossed it on Sunday, when there was not a cloud in the sky, and when the most sublime Sunday service the mind can well imagine pervaded the tremendous silence and grandeur of the whole distance. That night we lay at Domo D'Ossola, and yesterday we came on here. Both at the Austrian frontier and at the gate of Milan we were received with the greatest politeness and consideration. I am bound to say that I never knew the usual Passport and Custom-House regulations more obligingly enforced. So here we are.

We stayed two days with Townshend very

pleasantly indeed, and I had the gratification of receiving your note with the Prince's kind enclosure—for which pray thank him in my name—and also of further hearing of you from our host himself, who beamed “like one entire and perfect” soft smile when he produced your hand-writing. My old Lausanne friends were all so cordially happy to see me that I felt half ashamed of myself for being liked so much beyond my deserts. Our stay there disposed of, we went on to Geneva and so to Chamounix, which, at this time of the year—no visitors, the hotels shutting up, and all the people who can afford it going away—is far more primitive and interesting than as one usually sees it. We went up to the Mer de Glace through pretty deep snow, warmed ourselves at a wood fire on the ice, came down again and stayed a day in the valley, left Mont Blanc at 7 in the morning just reddened on its utmost height by the sun and without a cloud upon it, and crossed to Martigny. These achievements (with a variety of gymnastic exercises with a pole, superadded) I performed on foot, to the infinite satisfaction of the Guides, who pronounced me “a strong Intrepid,” and were of opinion that I ought to ascend Mont Blanc next summer. I told them in return that it had become such a nuisance in my country that there was some idea of

authorizing Paxton to take it down and re-erect it at Sydenham.

We go on to Genoa by the mail to-morrow, where some more of my old friends expect me and are going to hold a small festival on the great occasion. I find my companions so unused to the notion of never going to bed, except in large towns, that Sicily is already erased from the trip, and Naples substituted for its utmost limit. We shall return too, for shortness, by the way of Paris—where I shall probably take up Charley about the 8th or 9th of December. If you should have leisure to write me a few lines with ten days or so—or say a week—after the receipt of this, Poste Restante Rome will find me. After that Florence, after that, Venice, after that Genoa again, as we shall return by way of Marseilles.

It is so strange and like a dream to me, to hear the delicate Italian once again, and to recover the knowledge of (such as it is) which I almost thought I had lost. So beautiful too to see the delightful sky again, and all the picturesque wonders of the country. And yet I am so restless to be [illegible]—and always shall be, I think, so long as I have any portion of time—that if I were to stay more than a week in any one city here, I believe I should be half desperate to begin some new story!!!

The references in the letter of November 13th are to Sir Henry Lazard, to a son of the Honourable Caroline Norton, and to Sir Thomas Emerson Tennent (1804-69), first baronet, traveller, barrister, politician and author.

ROME

Sunday Night, Thirtieth November. 1853

... We came from Genoa to Naples—I ought rather to say, went—in the *Talitha* steamer, an English ship placed upon this route chiefly to convey the Overland India Mail from Malm to Marseilles, when it becomes due. Our countrymen and women, and the men and women of all other European regions, are so much attracted by the fame of this ship, that we found it when we went aboard perfectly crammed. There were about forty passengers, without any berths, blankets, seats at dinner, or other accommodation in the way of eating, drinking, or sleeping—the whole having paid heavy first class fares. The first night we lay on the planks of the deck, with thirty seven unfortunates—of whom thirty two declared all night that they would write to *The Times* in the morning. You never saw so ridiculous a scene. Insane attempts to make pillows of carpet bags, hat boxes, and life buoys—wild endeavours to screen ladies off with flags, which invariably fell down as soon as they had

tied their heads up in extraordinary dimity
 machines taken out of reticules elaborately worked
 in worsted—and in the middle of the night a
 perfectly tropical rain which swept the whole
 ship clear in a minute and crowded us all to-
 gether on the cabin stairs, where we remained
 all night, whenever any desperate creature came
 below, all tumbling down, and whenever any
 other desperate creature ascended to the deck,
 all tumbling up again. As a distinguished
 Englishman in my way, I became the brother
 of all the officers in half an hour, and set off
 with them next day (we being detained at Leghorn
 four and twenty hours) to see Pisa, which ex-
 pedition I made with the comfortable assurance
 that the *Valetta* could never go without us, while
 the Captain was in our company. He was so
 much affected by our sufferings that next night
 he put Mr Collins and Mr Egg in the store
 room (opened for the occasion) where they slept
 on little dressers, with the pickles, spices, tea,
 fruits, and a very large double Glo'ster cheese
 in cut—the whole forming a combination of
 smells of which they were profoundly innocent
 after they had been there (it was under water
 too) five minutes, but which, to my senses, has
 left a general flavor of chandlery and grocery
 about them ever since. I was superbly lodged
 in the steward's cabin, that potentate sitting in

an arm-chair all night, and resigning his bed (four feet and a half by one and a quarter) to me. It was very comfortable though the Engine was under the pillow, and the wall extremely nervous, and the whole in a profuse perspiration of warm oil. At Naples I found Layard—with whom we ascended Vesuvius in the sunlight and came down in the moonlight, very merrily. Talking of Italian, I *must* mention that Emerson Tennent and his family were of the party—they had been in the *Valetta*—and that he stopped the Expedition indignantly, a little way up the cone, to demand “a church” for his daughter. He meant a chair, but he persisted in, and insisted on, having “Una chiesa”—to the unspeakable amazement and consternation of the forty screeching vagabonds who formed our escort. My heart misgives me in relating this story even to you, for he wanted to turn his son out of his bed (and stranger still the son wanted to turn out too) when he heard of my lying on the deck. But we laughed about it so ridiculously afterwards, with Layard, that I can’t help this little bit of treason.

There has been a wretched business with young Brinsley Norton (the youngest living son of that unhappy marriage) at Naples. He has recently turned Catholic and married a Peasant girl at Capri, who knows nothing about anything

A DEPLORABLE AFFAIR

—shoes and hair brushes included—and whom he literally picked up off the beach. They told me about it at the Embassy. He had not been married a fortnight when I was there. One of the attachés had just seen him in his “Island home”, translating Longfellow’s poems which he is supposed not to understand in the least, into Neapolitan—of which he knows nothing—for the entertainment of his wife—who couldn’t possibly comprehend a line under the most favorable circumstances. His brother is supposed to be going to marry a sister of the young lady’s, and altogether it seems to be a most deplorable affair.

It was very hot at Naples, and I have some highly ornamental marks of mosquito bites. The same men with the same instruments, were singing the same songs, to the same tunes, all along the sea shore in the morning, as when I was there Nine years ago. Affairs with France looked queer, and the French Ambassador left while I was there, in high dudgeon. It made considerable talk. Verdi is still the rage. In a poor enough opera of his—very well done indeed, at San Carlo, there was a Prima Donna who I think will soon make a great success in England. Pompeii has greatly increased in interest of late years, several fine houses having been excavated, and one being left imperfectly

dug out, with the ruined and broken roof still upon it—which gives a perfect and admirable idea of the process of destruction. Meanwhile Vesuvius looks on very peaceably—for the present.

... I was amazed by the life and enterprize in Genoa, and the increase in the place since I lived there. If it goes on in the same way long, its old commercial greatness will be renewed again.

I admit that they do not speak very clearly or sweetly about Milan and in that country, but they can if they choose, and they do choose when a stranger speaks to them. The language has a pleasant sound in my ears, however spoken almost, which no other has except my own.

VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE.

Thursday Twenty Second June, 1854.

. . You cannot think what a delightful cottage we have got. The rooms are larger than those in the old house, and there are more of them, but the oddities are almost as great, and the situation—on the top of this hill, instead of three parts down it—is most beautiful. We have a field behind the house, with a road of our own to the Column—unbounded air—capital garden—and all for five guineas a week.

I anticipate shewing it to you some time in the autumn, with great pleasure And there are a variety of ingenious devices in the Robinson Crusoe way affected by the undersigned (who I think has moved every article of furniture in the house, since Monday afternoon) which must be *studied*, to be appreciated

The camp is not a mile off, and I have been in terror lest I should hear the drums I went over yesterday, to reconnoitre the enemy It is a very curious and picturesque scene The 3 or 4,000 soldiers now here, are building mud huts thatched with straw, for the 50 or 60,000 who are to come I should think there are about 1,000,000 trusses of straw piled up ready for use, and the 3 or 4,000 men (lazier than any men I ever saw) are constantly wheeling little barrows of earth about—containing twelve tablespoonfulls each, as nearly as I can estimate. Except that nobody is brisk, it looks like the opening of some capital French play

Our children arrived on Tuesday by the London boat, in every stage and aspect of sea sickness When I saw them land (Sydney with an immense basket, and a Custom House Officer in a cocked hat much bigger than the child looking into it) Flight seemed the only course open to me The Nurse was prostrate, and (generally speaking) was carried by the Baby

instead of carrying him. That wonderful young creature was the admiration of the sternest Mariner aboard—which I never heard of a Suffolk Baby yet—in consequence of the gentleness with which he was perpetually looking out of a white basin and in the intervals of his paroxysms, pitying his family and attendants. They arrived after dark, with 27 packages, whereof 5 prodigious chests belonged to Mamy and Katy's governess, who is a Frenchwoman and so small that I should have thought a hat box might have contained her entire wardrobe. In the dead of night when we were all asleep, a vigilant Custom House Agent appeared with 22 of those picturesque but screeching women who look after the baggage. The hill being extremely steep, they had harnessed themselves with ropes to the 27 packages. The Tremendous uproar is inconceivable

Mr St George and his "infamous proceeding" have passed into oblivion. The *Good-Natured Man* is one of Goldsmith's comedies.

VILLA DU CAMP DE DROITE, BOULOGNE

Thursday, Twenty Second June 1854.

That is a most infamous proceeding on the part of Mr. St George. Those people who are

SLUMS AND OVERCROWDING

so horribly charitable at other people's expence, and who will commit any duplicity in furtherance of their object—which they call a good one—are among the worst of Impostors. The Bailiff in the *Good Natured Man* says of his Follower "he's a good deal in need of assistance and as I can't afford to assist him myself I must get you to do it, Master" Which seems to me, in comparison, a respectable thing

It is difficult to understand why Miss Burdett-Coutts should have been in "a maze" about an article to working men which appeared in *Household Words*, October 7th, 1854. It was a much-needed warning against the dangers of slums and overcrowding, which to the present day remain a disgrace to our Christian civilization. Dickens admonished his readers that unless citizens set themselves in earnest to improve the towns in which they lived, and to improve the dwellings of the poor, they would be guilty, before God, of wholesale murder. The people should not be led astray by high political authorities, on the one hand, or by sharking mountebanks on the other. He made an earnest appeal to working men to unite to demand a reform which so nearly concerned the welfare of themselves and their families. Dickens followed this up with an equally cogent article entitled, "The Home Question," in *Household Words* for November 11th, 1854.

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Twenty Sixth October 1854

.. I am very sorry you are in a maze about the article to Working Men—which was written by a friend of yours Its meaning is, that they never will save their children from the dreadful and unnatural mortality now prevalent among them (almost too murderous to be thought of), or save themselves from untimely sickness and death, until they have cheap pure water in unlimited quantity, wholesome air, constraint upon little landlords like our Westminster friends to keep their property decent under the heaviest penalties, efficient drainage and such alterations in building acts as shall preserve open spaces in the closest regions, and make them where they are not now That a worthless Government which is afraid of every little interest and trembles before the vote of every dust contractor, will never do these things for them or pay the least sincere attention to them, until they are made election questions and the working-people unite to express their determination to have them, or to keep out of Parliament by every means in their power, every man who turns his back upon these first necessities It is more than ever necessary to keep their need of social Reforms before them at this time, for I clearly see that the war will be made an administration

excuse for all sorts of shortcomings, and that nothing will have been done when the cholera comes again. Let it come twice again, severely,—the people advancing all the while in the knowledge that humanly speaking, it is, like Typhus Fever in the mass, a preventible disease—and you will see such a shake in this country as never was seen on Earth since Samson pulled the Temple down upon his head

I wish you would read, in next week's No. of *Household Words*, an article called Our French Watering Place (with a portrait of my Boulogne landlord), and a Poem called The Moral of this Year.

Miss Burdett-Coutts did not carry out her suggestion of presenting a piece of ground in Swain's Lane, Highgate, as an open space, but as an alternative she provided a site for the schools of St. Anne's Church, Highgate

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Wednesday Second May 1855

I looked carefully at the Highgate piece of ground the other day, and I think it on the whole very eligible for presentation as an open space

These are my reasons,

1 It abuts immediately on the lane as you go up to the Cemetery, and consequently never could be diminished or built in upon that margin.

2 If the field opposite to it and below your large summer-house belongs to you, that West side of the ground is wonderfully free

3 The ground itself is so shaped that it seems scarcely possible to build anything outside the top wall but one or two villas on the top of the rise, with lawns or gardens sloping downward to the piece of ground, which would not at all detract from its beauty, and would not too closely hem it in.

4 The plan of building now carrying out at the East or Small Pox Hospital side, suggests that in that direction also, the piece of ground will have gardens turned towards it.

Lastly the ground itself is of a wonderfully appropriate shape for an open space, and is so high in the most ornamental part that the view must always remain. The bottom would make an admirable children's playground, and the upper part with a few seats and a few more trees would be a beautiful little Park in itself

Dickens's new book was *Little Dorrit*, or *Nobody's Fault*, as it was called up to the eve of publication

The two old ladies at Deptford were not

descendants of Dr. Johnson, who had no children, but were the daughters of Mauritius Lowe, an historical, and afterwards a portrait, painter, born in the middle of the eighteenth century. He was much befriended by Dr. Johnson, who was godfather to his son and to one of his two daughters. To each godchild he left a legacy of £100. Lowe, who is said to have been improvident and ill-conditioned by nature, drifted into poverty, and the poorer he became the greater were the efforts of Dr. Johnson to help him and his unfortunate family. There is, wrote Miss Burney, "a certain poor wretch of a villainous painter, one Mr Lowe, whom Dr Johnson recommends to all the people he thinks can afford to sit for their picture"¹

As an old lady Johnson's god-daughter said she remembered sitting on his knee and being made to repeat the Lord's Prayer. How Carlyle discovered Miss Lowe and her sister is unknown, but being convinced of their *bona fides* he drew up a memorial to the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, asking for a pension to be granted out of the "funds for the encouragement of literature." This memorial was also signed by Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Macaulay, Bulwer Lytton, Disraeli, Bishop Wilberforce, Dean Milman, and other eminent men. Lord Palmerston was unable to grant the pension, but in June, 1855, gave a donation of £100 from some other fund—probably the Royal Bounty Fund.

¹ Dr Birkbeck Hill's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, vol 4, page 202

This being inadequate, a letter signed by Carlyle, Dickens, and Forster appeared in *The Times* of November 1, 1855, appealing to the nation to subscribe about £400 to purchase an annuity, subscriptions to be sent to Messrs Coutts Johnson's god-daughter was then in her seventy-eighth year, and was living with her sister, aged 72, at 5, Minerva-place, New-cross, Deptford. They were described as living in "rigorous but not undignified poverty," and as having numerous memorials of Johnson in their possession. Among these memorials was "the fir desk," which was "capable of being rigorously authenticated" as the one upon "which Samuel Johnson wrote the English Dictionary."

The desk was acquired by the Reverend Augustus K B Granville, of C C C (Cambridge), incumbent of St James, Hatcham, London, by whom it was presented in 1867 to Pembroke College, Oxford, where it is preserved in the Library, together with another Johnson desk from Lichfield,—information kindly supplied by Mr R G Collingwood, the Librarian of Pembroke College.

Mauritius Lowe died ten years after Dr Johnson, whose godson obtained a minor appointment in the Barbados, (1810-13) and died shortly afterwards.

In *The Times* of October 3, 1857, there is a report of the sale of building materials of the chambers formerly occupied by Dr Johnson at No 1 Inner Temple Lane, with a statement that the staircase, the wainscoting, banisters, the

carved wood over the door, with pilasters, forming an external doorway, were to be preserved in perpetuity by the Benchers, although they had to be removed from their original position. The material disposed of sold for £10 5s. A tall oak bookcase and a cupboard in Dr. Johnsons' House, Gough Square, are said to be made from wood from this source

Many admirers of Johnson, and the public generally, can hardly be aware of the debt of gratitude they owe to Mr Cecil Harmsworth for having purchased the house in Gough Square where Dr Johnson lived for eleven years, and where the famous Dictionary was compiled, restored the building in the most perfect taste, and preserved it in perpetuity as a national memorial to Johnson

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Tuesday Eighth May 1855

I am in a state of restlessness impossible to be described—impossible to be imagined—wearing and tearing to be experienced I sit down of a morning, with all kinds of notes for my new book (for which by the bye, I think I have a capital name)—resolve to begin—get up, and go out and walk a dozen miles—sit down again next morning—get up and go down a railroad—come back again, and register a vow to go out of town instantly, and begin at the

feet of the Pyrenees—sit down again—get up and walk about my room all day—wander about London till midnight—make engagements and am too distraught to keep them—couldn't go to the Academy Dinner—felt it impossible to bear the speeches—pleaded Influenza at the last moment—and am at present going through the whole routine, over and over again

Two old ladies have turned up at Deptford, who are the last descendants (I think Great Grand-daughters) of Samuel Johnson. Mr Carlyle has found them—in great poverty, but undemonstrative and uncomplaining, though very old—with nothing to speak of in the wide world, but the plain fir desk on which Johnson wrote his English Dictionary

Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-94) had a somewhat stormy political life. From 1851, when he gave up his work as an archæologist to devote himself to politics, he came into collision with the Tapers and Tadpoles of the Liberal Party. It is said "his manner was brusque, and his advocacy of the causes which he had at heart, though always perfectly sincere, was vehement to the point sometimes of recklessness." He never hesitated to speak and vote against his own party when he felt called upon to do so. What particular "mistake" he made in 1855, to which Dickens refers, cannot be

“A REFORMER HEART AND SOUL”

traced. After having been twice Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he fortunately gave up politics for diplomacy. In the following and other letters, Dickens appears to have underestimated the conservative spirit of his fellow-countrymen, and their capacity for endurance.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Friday Eleventh May. 1855

Layard has made a mistake. The men who would run him to death have wilfully committed all manners of perversions a thousand times, and have no claim upon my sympathy in their unfair pursuit of him, and every claim upon my suspicion and resentment. Take my knowledge of the state of things in this distracted land, for what it may be worth a dozen years hence. The people will not bear for any length of time what they bear now. I see it clearly written in every truthful indication that I am capable of discerning anywhere. And I want to interpose something between them and their wrath.

For this reason solely, I am a Reformer heart and soul. I have nothing to gain—everything to lose (for public quiet is my bread)—but I am in desperate earnest, because I know it is a desperate case.

You will believe that I have no sympathy

with any misstatement of fact, or hesitation in withdrawing it I wouldn't be unfair, if I knew it, to any human being. I should hate myself if I were

You think me impetuous, because I sometimes speak of things I have long thought about, with a suddenness that brings me only to the conclusion I had come at, and does not shew the road by which I arrived there But it is a broad highway notwithstanding, and I have trod it slowly and patiently. Only believe that, and you may think me as impetuous as you like Think me anything you like, so that you write me letters I am so proud of.

Paxton, mentioned in the next letter, was Sir Joseph Paxton (1801-65), who designed the building of the Industrial Exhibition in Hyde Park, the building now known as the Crystal Palace Mr Morley, the chairman of the City Association, was Mr Samuel Morley (1809-86), the wealthy philanthropic Nonconformist textile manufacturer Miss Burdett-Coutts's town house was 1, Stratton Street, Piccadilly

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Tuesday Fifteenth, May, 1855

Shortly to resume the Ninevite question

As I said before, Lazard made a mistake—was too much ill-treated and insulted to be able

to repair it then (which would have required a man with great presence of mind and perfectly free from impetuosity—say, for instance, myself)—and so gave his enemies a handle against him, which they use. I differ from you altogether, as to his setting class against class. He finds them already set in opposition. And I think you hardly bear in mind that as there are two great classes looking at each other in this question, so there are two sides to the question itself. You assume that the popular class takes the initiative. Now as *I* read the story, the aristocratic class did that, years and years ago, and it is *they* who have put *their* class in opposition to the country—not the country which puts itself in opposition to *them*.

My present position with Layard is exactly this. I felt (before the mistake—as I remember, a week or ten days before), that he needed support, I was struck, at your house, to see him so changed and anxious, I happened to come into the knowledge of bitter endeavours and private influences that were at work to put him down, and I wrote to him, urging him not to be discouraged, telling him that I thought him, in the circumstances of the time, the most useful man in the house, and that I considered it a positive duty to render him all the help I could, short of going there myself. Such help

as I could give him then, I did give him immediately, and he was very sensible of it. He shewed me his resolutions, some days before he made them known in the house, and in the main I approved. Then came the mistake. We dined together on the very next day after it, and I besought him for Heaven's sake to be careful. In another day or two, came the City Administrative Reform Meeting, and proposal for establishing an association. I resolved to become a Member of it, and to give (as a kind of example to a large class), Twenty Pounds. I felt that Layard wanted, and I considered in spite of his error that he deserved, some little backing, and I wrote him a note saying "Do you tell Mr Lindsay that the association may rely upon me to this extent." Last Saturday, in pursuance of an old engagement made weeks before the mistake, he and I dined at Greenwich with Paxton and some others. Layard then asked me, Had I heard from Mr Morley, the Chairman of that City Association, because Mr Morley had asked him whether he thought I could by any means be got to speak at a Meeting in Drury Lane Theatre, if they should decide to hold one there? I considered about it, and said my impression was that I would speak on such an occasion, but that before I could pledge myself, I must first know everything that was

intended to be done, and be sure that I approved of it. I made this a text for again impressing upon him the necessity of being careful under so great a responsibility (putting it as my own feeling about myself), and he earnestly assented, adding "If you go, I will go, but not otherwise, I think."

I am anxious to have a perfect confidence with you on the subject, and now you know all I know. If I can exercise any influence with him, I hope it will be to keep him cooler and steadier. No man can move me on such a matter, beyond what I have made up my mind is right. And as to my even being tempted into any hot public assertion, I believe if you had ever seen me under speechifying circumstances, you would have a perfect confidence in my composure—in short, in my having left that impetuosity—say in Stratton Street.

The "grown-up play" was Wilkie Collins's *The Lighthouse*. The scene painter was Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. (1793-1867), and the man to be shown "what it means" was Benjamin Nottingham Webster (1797-1882), a comedian and theatrical manager. The lady who deplored that Dickens did anything else than act was Mrs Elizabeth Yates (1799-1860). Her maiden name was Miss Brunton, and in 1823 she married the actor Frederick Henry Yates. As an artist

she challenged comparison with the best actresses of her period Lady Becher, the wife of Sir Wrixon Becher, first baronet, was Miss Eliza O'Neill, an actress also

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Twenty Fourth May. 1855.

... Pray be within reach of this house about the middle of next month We are going to do a *grown-up Play* in the children's theatre, with a smaller audience and a larger stage Mr Collins has written an odd Melo-Drama, the whole action of which (of course it is short) takes place in a lighthouse He shewed it to me for advice, and some suggestions that I made to him involved a description of how such a thing ought to be done in a Theatre—and might be done if there were more sense in such places So we are going to show Mr Webster what it means¹ and Mr. Stanfield, full of his nautical and theatrical ardor, has taken possession of the Schoolroom, and will really paint and make out an illusion of a very fine kind, as far as *his* art goes

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Twenty Ninth May. 1855

Mr. Stanfield being at present shut up in the Schoolroom with two of the dirtiest artificers I ever saw—who have been dug out of the

profoundest depths of some Theatre, appear to have wallowed in gas from their infancy, and are now making chalk lines all over the floor, while the distinguished painter coerces them with an umbrella—I am in a condition to report that the *Night is Saturday the 16th of June*

. The interlineations in this note, are attributable to my being at work on the new book—which makes me perfectly reckless as to erasures

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Tuesday Nineteenth June 1855

. The audience were not so *demonstrative* last night as on Saturday, and the Corps Dramatique were disposed to think them “flat” I observed however that they were crying vigorously, and I think they were quite as much moved and pleased as on Saturday, though they did not cheer the actors on so much—except in the Farce Everybody played exactly as on the previous night—including Mr Forster, who buffeted the guests (I am informed) in the same light and airy manner. Mrs Stanfield was mollified, and certainly seemed to have been hustled out of the house on Saturday Night, like a species of pick-pocket Lady Becher was evidently very much impressed and surprised, and Mrs Yates said (with a large, red circle

round each eye), "O Mr. Dickens what a pity it is you can do anything else!" Longman the bookseller was seen to cry dreadfully—and I don't know that anything could be said beyond that!

At the beginning of the Crimean War, Miss Burdett-Coutts sent out patent drying sheds in which the men exposed to the weather, that first dreadful winter, might dry their sodden clothes when off duty. In this practical work of sympathy Dickens co-operated with her.

Mr. John Sutherland, M D (1808-91), the well-known promoter of sanitary science and inspector under the first Board of Health, was sent by Lord Palmerston to investigate the sanitary conditions of the troops in the Crimea. He carried out great sanitary reforms in the army, and in the following letter, dated June 27th, 1855, written to Dickens from Constantinople, he bore testimony to the value of the drying machines sent out by Miss Burdett-Coutts.

Crockett's 'coon has become proverbial on both sides of the Atlantic. The Colonel was supposed to be a dead shot, and it was alleged that one day while out racoon shooting, he levelled his gun at an "old 'coon" concealed in a tree, whereupon the 'coon cried out, "Hallo there! Air you Colonel Crockett?" For if you air, I'll just come down, or I know I am a gone 'coon." Dr Brewer adds that Martin Scott, Lieutenant-

General of the United States, is said to have had a prior claim to this saying. Is it possible that the 'coon story arose from one of these gentlemen having been in pursuit not of a racoon, but of a black coon,—or, in other words, of a runaway slave?

David Crockett (1786–1836) was an American frontiersman, born in Greene County, Tennessee, who acquired reputation as a hunter and a trapper. He served in the Creek War under Andrew Jackson, and subsequently became a colonel in the Tennessee militia. In 1821 he became a member of the State legislature, having won his election not by making speeches, but by telling stories, of which the 'coon may have been one. Later he was elected four times to the National House of Representatives, and his shrewdness, eccentric manners and peculiar wit are said to have made him a conspicuous figure at Washington. Finally he emigrated to Texas, where he took part in the struggle for independence, and was killed on March 6th, 1836, at San Antonio. No further reference has been found to Martin Scott.

DEAR MR. DICKENS,

Some ages ago I received a note from you forwarded to me at Balaklava introducing a drying machine and its bearer for the hospital at Scutari.

I did what I could with people in and out of authority in Scutari to get their aid in putting

up the machine, and heard nothing more of it till the day before yesterday. On that day I went over the hospital for the first time these three months and found it in operation. It is well put up, gives great satisfaction and does its work so effectually that the wet clothes, Like David Crocket's Coon, *give in* as soon as they have seen it and dry up forthwith, at least such is the general impression if I can judge from the terms in which it was spoken of

The Machine does great credit to Miss Coutts' philanthropy and also to your engineering.

With sincere regards

I am Yours ever

J. SUTHERLAND.

The disturbances in Hyde Park were caused by the Sunday Bill introduced in the House of Commons by Lord Robert Grosvenor (1801-93), at that time the Whig member for Middlesex. The opposition to the bill led to riots on June 24th and July 1st and 8th, and the bill was eventually withdrawn. Lord Robert was afterwards created the first Baron Ebury.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Monday Twenty Seventh June 1855

... I am sorry for what occurred in Hyde Park, but it is an illustration of what I en-

deavoured to put before you in reference to to-night's Association—I mean the extraordinary ignorance on the part of those who make the laws, of what is behind us, and what is ever ready to break in if it be too long despised. I have said to any one in Parliament whom I know and have happened to see, since Lord Robert Grosvenor brought in that bill, "how can you be so mad as to let it creep on? There is no power in the Country that can enforce it if it be passed, the people are going wild by being worried on the subject, they have suffered an amount of cruel denial and discomfort through the last Sunday bill, which you don't or won't understand; and it is wonderful to see you rushing on to riot and disturbance as you are" Some don't understand how things can be so, many more don't care, and the dangerous result is brought about that the people get no hearing until they break out into tumult—and then the business is done in a moment

If Lord Robert Grosvenor were so ignorant as to bring in that bill on the requisition of any fanatic people whomsoever, he is simply the last man who ought to represent Middlesex—which I hope he will never do again.

Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795-1854), the author of *Ion* and *Memorials of Charles Lamb*,

was a member of Parliament and eventually a judge.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Thursday Twelfth July 1855.

. The chief employment of Talfourd's confidential clerk was to prevent his taking his hat off his head, or his watch out of his pocket, to give it in his kindness to would-be poets by whom he was beset

The Watson referred to was probably Joshua Watson, the philanthropist, who died on June 30th, 1855

PARIS, 49 AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES,

Tuesday November Thirteenth 1855

.. I did not tell you that I am going to read at Peterborough in the middle of next month, as a mark of affectionate respect for Watson, poor dear fellow, who was connected with the place, and that Mrs Watson is going with me. It will be the first time she has seen the place for many a long day

49 CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS.

Thursday Tenth January 1856

. I have made arrangements with a large bookselling-house in Paris here, for the publi-

cation of a French translation of the whole of my books. A volume will appear about once a month, and it will take a year and a half or two years to complete. It will be a pleasant thing to have done in one's life time. It is their venture, and they pay me three or four hundred pounds for it besides. The Portrait for which I have been sitting to Ary Scheffer, is just done. He is a great painter, and of course it has great merit. I doubt if I should know it, myself—but it is always possible that I may know other people's faces pretty well, without knowing my own.

Referring to Gadshill Place, Dickens wrote to Forster on the 13th February, 1856 "The good old rector now there has lived in it six-and-twenty years, so I have not the heart to turn him out. He is to remain till Lady Day next year, when I shall go in, please God, make my alterations, furnish the house, and keep it for myself that summer."

Mr Austin was Henry Austin, "Dickens's brother-in-law and counsellor in regard to all such matters in his own house."

HOUSEHOLD WORDS OFFICE

Saturday Ninth February 1856

.. As to Gad's Hill Place—which is the name of my house. If you mean in your kind

note, the refusal of it *now*, I am sorry to say that it is not now available. As I told Mrs Brown yesterday, the Rector lives in it, and has lived in it for some years, and the object Wills and I have in view in going down there directly, is to ask him how and when it will suit his convenience to come out—as of course I wish to treat him with all handsome consideration. It is not now a furnished house, but my object is, as soon as I shall have got rid of the tenant, to make it clean and pretty in the papering and painting way, and then to furnish it in the most comfortable and cosy manner, and let it by the month whenever I can. Whenever I cannot, I shall use it for myself and make it a change for Charley from Saturday to Monday. When all this is done, I shall have a delight in taking you down to see it which I shall not try here to express, and if you should like it so well as to think of ever occupying it as a little easy change, I shall be far more attached to the spot than ever. I think you will be very much pleased with it. It is so old-fashioned, plain, and comfortable. On the summit of Gad's Hill, with a noble prospect at the side and behind, looking down into the Valley of the Medway. Lord Darnley's Park at Cobham (a beautiful place with a noble walk through a wood) is close by it, and Rochester is within a mile or two. It is

GADSHILL

only an hour and a quarter from London by the Railway To crown all, the sign of the Sir John Falstaff is over the way, and I used to look at it as a wonderful Mansion (which God knows it is not), when I was a very odd little child with the first faint shadows of all my books in my head—I suppose

Mr Austin surveyed it for me, and was greatly struck by it Large sums of money have been expended on it (for such a small place) at various times, and he found everything about the garden and so forth, in the best order There is a very pretty garden, and a shrubbery on the other side of the high road, at which the house looks When I exhibit it to you with all my contrivances accomplished—of course some of them will be wonderfully ingenious—I will tell you what I paid for it

49 CHAMPS ELYSÉES

Tuesday Nineteenth, February, 1856

Your note finds me settling myself to little Dorrit again, and in the usual wretchedness of such settlement—which is unsettlement prowling about the rooms, sitting down, getting up, stirring the fire, looking out of window, tearing my hair, sitting down to write, writing nothing, writing something and tearing it up,

going out, coming in, a Monster to my family, a dread Phenomenon to myself, &c &c. &c.

The play in course of preparation was *The Frozen Deep*, by Wilkie Collins. "O" was a friendly designation for Mrs. Brown.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Tuesday, Thirtieth May 1856

... I am not without hope that in the winter nights when we are alone here, you and Mrs Brown may be induced to take some interest in what I dare say you never saw—the growth of a play from the beginning. Mr Collins and I have hammered out a curious idea for a new one, which he is to write, and which we purpose, please God, to bring out on Charley's birthday. Mr Stanfield has already been hanging out of the centre back-window of the school-room at the risk of his life, inventing wonderful effects and measuring the same. If you and O were to come into the secret from the commencement, and see all the ways and means and the gradual improvement of it, and the trials of patience to which my young people are submitted, and the general ingenuity and good humour, I think it would pass a few dark evenings pleasantly.

The Mr Palmer referred to was William Palmer, M R C S., the Rugeley poisoner, who after murdering his wife in 1854, made away with his brother, and then his friend Thomas Parsons Cook in 1855, to obtain money. He was convicted, and hanged on June 14th, 1856. The trial excited extraordinary interest. In the article in *Household Words* for June 14th, 1856; Dickens, after referring to Palmer as "the greatest villain that ever stood in the Old Bailey dock," describes his "complete self-possession" during the trial, his "constant coldness," his "profound composure," and his "perfect equanimity." In all this Dickens saw "no inconsistency" and "no fortitude." Such demeanour signified nothing but "cruelty" and "insensibility."

TAVISTOCK HOUSE.

Sunday First June 1856 (Mid Winter)

You cannot imagine what a wonderful sight Illuminated and Fireworked London was, from the top of St. Pauls. I must try my hand at a description of it in *Household Words*. In the next No but one, by the bye, I wish you would read an opening paper of mine, with the rather alarming title of "The demeanour of Murderers." It is a quiet protest against the newspaper descriptions of Mr Palmer in Court shewing why they are harmful to the public at large, and why they are, even in themselves,

altogether blind and wrong *I* think it rather a curious and serviceable essay!

I am writing in a great coat and a fûr cap.

Among her many activities, Miss Burdett-Coutts did much to promote needlework, for which she had classes, gave prizes, and often spoke to the girls at Whitelands Training College. James Kay Shuttleworth, created a baronet in 1849, as Secretary to the Committee of Counsel on Education, introduced the system of examination of schools by Government inspectors.

BOULOGNE, VILLA DES MOULINEAUX

Friday Eleventh July 1856

. . I thoroughly agree in that interesting part of your note which refers to the immense uses, direct and indirect, of needlework. Also as to the great difficulty of getting many men to understand them. And I think Shuttleworth and the like would have gone on to the crack of doom, melting down all the thimbles in Great Britain and Ireland, and making medals of them to be given for a knowledge of Watersheds and Pre Adamite vegetation (both immensely comfortable to a labouring man with a large family and a small income), if it hadn't been for you.

I spell Harbor without the letter u, because

"U AND I"

the modern spelling of such words as "Harbor, arbor, parlor," &c (modern within the last quarter of a century) discards that vowel, as belonging in that connexion to another sound—such as hour and sour But, if it will be the slightest satisfaction to you, I will take that vowel up again, and fight for it as long as I live U and I shall be inseparable, and nothing shall ever part us

John Forster (1812-76), Dickens's friend and biographer, married on the 24th of September, 1856, Eliza Ann, daughter of Robert Crosbie, R N, and widow of Henry Colburn, the well-known publisher Eighteen years previously he had been betrothed to Miss L E Landon, but the engagement, for some reason, was broken off, and unfortunately for herself, the poetess married George Maclean Forster's resignation of the editorship of *The Examiner* appears to have been due not to his marriage but to his appointment as secretary to the Commissioners of Lunacy. Five years later he was made a Commissioner of Lunacy, with a salary of £1,500 a year

BOULOGNE

Tuesday Fifteenth July 1856

Pray read a story in two parts in *Household Words*—next No. and the following one—called

Anne Rodney's Diary. It is by Mr Collins, and I think possesses very remarkable merit—especially the close of it I forget whether I have already mentioned it in a former note. If I had forgive the repetition. .

Mr Forster is going to marry a widow—five or six and thirty, agreeable, and rather pretty—with as many thousand pounds as she is of age. Thereupon, he will relinquish the editing of the *Examiner*, which is to be regretted, as he is one of the most responsible and careful of literary men associated with newspapers—though he *does* hustle an unoffending Company, sometimes.

race, velvet-eyed. He sent word that he would 'look round.' He looked round, appeared in the doorway of the room, and slightly cocked up his evil eye at the goldfinch. Instantly a raging thirst beset that bird, and when it was appeased, he still drew several unnecessary buckets of water, leaping about his perch, and sharpening his bill with irrepressible satisfaction."

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX,

Wednesday Thirteenth August, 1856

. Pray tell Mrs Brown with my love, that the flowers are beautiful, and that Mary is improving in her powers of floral arrangement every day. In two parts of the garden, we have sweet peas nearly seven feet high, and their blossoms rustle in the sun, like Peacocks' tails. We have honey-suckle that would be the finest in the world—if that were not at Gad's Hill. The house is invisible at a few yards' distance, hidden in roses and geraniums. The little bird is gradually getting less afraid of his thimble, and draws a world of water this hot weather. He hangs in the drawing-room now, with the other birds, and a tremendous sensation was created yesterday just before dinner by his being found hanging by the leg, upside down, in the cord from which one of their cages depended—twirling round and round as if he were roasting

for a course of poultry It took about half an hour to untwist him He was prodigiously ruffled, and staggered about as if he had been to the public house, but soon recovered

Some particulars of the Rev. Chauncey Hare Townshend are given in the note to Dickens's letter of October 8, 1853 (p 129) There were a good many other persons besides Dickens who thought that the political surgeons had made a mess of the peace that followed the Crimean War In particular, objection was taken to the neutralization of the Black Sea, to the guarantees given Turkey to secure her against foreign aggression, the cession by Russia of part of Bessarabia to Roumania, and above all to an attempt to interfere internationally with the liberty of the Press in Belgium—a design eloquently denounced by Mr. Gladstone. The first and third provisions named were cancelled in 1871 and 1878

VILLA DES MOULINEAUX

Wednesday, Thirteenth August, 1856

. I crossed from Folkestone a week ago, and found Townshend on board, fastened up in his carriage, in a feeble wideawake hat It was rather windy, and the sea broke pretty heavily over the deck. With sick women lying among his wheels in various attitudes of despair, he

looked like an ancient Briton of a weak constitution—say Boadicea's father—in his war-chariot on the field of battle I could not but mount the Royal Car, and I found it to be perforated in every direction with cupboards, containing every description of Physic, old brandy, East India Sherry, sandwiches, oranges, cordial waters, newspapers, pocket handkerchiefs, shawls, flannels, telescopes, compasses, repeaters, (for ascertaining the hour in the dark), and finger rings of great value He was on his way to Lausanne, and he asked me the extraordinary question “how Mrs Williams, the American Actress, kept her wig on?” I then perceived that mankind was to be in a conspiracy to believe that he wears his own hair

Some gravel got into my bath the other morning, and cut my left elbow, deep, in so complicated a manner, that I was obliged to send into the town for a surgeon to come and strap it up This reminds me of the political surgeons, and of the fearful mess they have made of the Peace But I have never doubted Lord Palmerston to be (considering the age in which he lives) the emptiest impostor and the most dangerous delusion, ever known Within three months of the peace, here are its main conditions broken and the whole world laughing at us! I am as certain that these men will get

us conquered at last, as I am that I shall die. We have been feared and hated a long time To become a jest after that, is a very, very, serious thing. Nobody knows what the English people will be when they wake up at last and find it out (NB This is the gravel that gets into my mind)

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Friday Twenty Sixth September. 1856.

. . I have come home to such an immense arrear of demands on my attention, that I am falling behind-hand with that reserve of *Little Dorrit* which has kept me easy during its progress, and to lose which would be a serious thing. All the week I have been hard at it with a view to tomorrow, but I have not been in a quick vein (which is not to be commanded), and have made but tardy way If I stick to it resolutely now, next week will bring me up If I let a day go now, there is no saying when I may work round again and come right

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Third October. 1856.

. Immense excitement was occasioned here last night by the arrival of Mr Collins in a breathless state, with the first two acts of his play in three Dispatches were sent off to

“THE FROZEN DEEP”

Brighton, to announce the fact. Charley exhibited an insane desire to copy it. There was talk of a Telegraph Message to Mr Stanfield in Wales. It is called *The Frozen Deep*, and is extremely clever and interesting—very serious and very curious.

The Mr Bentley referred to under the date October 30th, cannot be identified. He was not Mr Richard or Mr George Bentley, the publishers, nor will the description of his age fit in with any of the other Bentleys whose lives are recorded in the *D N B*

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Thursday Thirtieth October 1856

I have seen Mr Bentley (a very respectable grey-haired, high-dried little man, compounded of a Master of the Ceremonies in former years, a collector of Assessed Taxes, a highly trustworthy Book-keeper, and a Parish Clerk of five and thirty years standing)

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Thursday Fourth December 1856

... It is freezing, thawing, and snivelling. It is also densely foggy. Nobody can stand in the street, and nobody can quite fall. Mr

Stanfield, after undergoing unspeakable perils in the passage from Hampstead, is being held on a board fixed between two tall ladders (on account of Rheumatism) by two carpenters. It is exactly like a shabby coat of arms.

Miss Burdett-Coutts, having sent a pattern of a drab cotton material called "derry," which it was proposed to use for overalls and other purposes in the Home for Women at Shepherd's Bush, received in reply the following protest:

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Saturday, Fifteenth November 1856

I return Derry. I have no doubt it's a capital article, but it's a mortal dull color. Color these people always want, and color (as altered to fancy), I would always give them. In these cast-iron and mechanical days, I think even such a garnish to the dish of their monotonous and hard lives, of unspeakable importance. One color, and that of the earth earthy, is too much with them early and late. Derry might just as well break out into a stripe, or put forth a bud, or even burst into a full blown flower. Who is Derry that he is to make quakers of us all, whether we will or no!

The Home at Shepherd's Bush was carried on for some years with varying degrees of success. There were gratifying cases of redemption with new starts in life, and some successful efforts at emigration. But, on the whole, the work proved even more difficult than Dickens had foreseen, and after many discouragements and failures the scheme was given up.

Dickens's letters contain many amusing references to the difficulty of here and there reading words or phrases in the writing of Miss Burdett-Coutts. The writing looked so plain, but was often the despair of friends and secretaries, and for the lady to be unable to read what she herself had written was by no means unknown! Out of the complications that arose Miss Burdett-Coutts derived quiet amusement, and she was inclined to view with suspicion the claims of Mr Wills, or any of his three successors (Mr afterwards Sir John Hassard, Mr Clough, and C C Osborne) to infallibility. If she could not read the passage herself, she was not willing to admit that anyone else could! We may be sure that the following extracts from letters written between 1848 and 1857 by Dickens were enjoyed by Miss Burdett-Coutts.

Mr Tennant was the Rev W Tennant, the first Vicar of St Stephen's, Westminster.

The articles in *The Times* on Africa appeared during October, November and December, 1856, and excited much attention. Among other questions with which they dealt were the exploration of Central Africa, the peculiarities of Africa,

Algiers and the French, an attack on the Kabyles, and the legend of the Whip in Algiers.

DEVONSHIRE TERRACE

Thursday October Fifth. 1848

. I have been hammering again and again in the most ridiculous manner, at a rather illegible passage in one of your notes. I read it "—— could simplify it more." Who could, was the great question I had to solve. Proglyns? It looked like Proglyns I began to think whether I had ever met any clear-headed gentleman of that name, at your house. Not remembering him, I looked at it again "Judy's son" it was then, plainly But I rejected that, as a manifest impossibility Tennyson—July sawyer—Wednesday night—p n d y s g n (which looked like a Welsh name) until all at once I found it was "perhaps you"—and was very much relieved and complimented

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Tuesday Evening, First June 1852

... The most bewildering doubts beset me concerning "Trip"—or "Flip"—I can't make out which it is I hardly think you would propose Flip to me (which is a strong drink) at

"TRIP," "PERRY," "PELOWS"

Noon, and unless the word is "Trip," and means Mrs Brown, I am on a wide ocean of conjecture (Since writing the above, I have looked at your note again, in a sudden burst of hope that it might be "Tripe"—but there is no e) It *must* be Mrs Brown!

BOULOGNE *Sunday Tenth July, 1853*

I can't quite make out—my fault, no doubt!—the name of the applicant, of Cambridge Terrace, Liverpool Road If it be Perry, I never heard of her husband If it be Herry, I never heard of him If it is Sherry, I *have* heard of him—but only in connexion with the Spanish wine trade If it be Flerry, I never heard of him If it be Jerry, I never heard of him And if it be Henry, Benry, Stenry—Werry or Merry—I never heard of him

Twenty Sixth October, 1854

The conclusion of your note has greatly agitated my mind "With all kind regards and ——" then a wonderful word, which I at first thought was "Nelsons," but which I now make out to be "Pelows" What is a Pelow? what am I to do with it? To whom am I to give it? Does it require an answer? Is any Pelow

supposed to be enclosed, or was it left out by mistake, or can it have dropped out at the Post Office? I never was so disturbed by doubts and difficulties

PARIS

Tuesday Eighth April. 1856

... I have no doubt—please to observe particularly—NO DOUBT—that my reading, and not your writing, is to blame (indeed I generally find it too plain) but the second name of old Pierre is an appalling mystery to me. I defy Mr Wills to read it. I have got to this—old Pierre Mont—old Pierre Montle. I am going out to the house you give me the direction to, to enquire vaguely whether le vieux Pierre Montle—and then I shall cough—lodges there. If I get at him by these desperate means, you shall find the report on the other side

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Tuesday February Third, 1857

.. I read your letter at breakfast with great gravity and a general rustic sensation which I associated with the field and a vague idea of a syllabub in the garden, to the effect that "Mr Tennant will probably speak about a COW"

Coming shortly afterwards to an unknown girl in the country (otherwise un-introduced) I found it was CASE

I don't know who wrote the African articles in *The Times*, but I will enquire, and tell you Without at all disparaging Dr Livingstone or in the least doubting his facts, I think however that his deductions must be received with great caution The history of all African effort, hitherto, is a history of wasted European life, squandered European money, and blighted European hope—in which the generous English have borne a great share That it would be a great thing to cultivate that cotton and be independent of America, no one can doubt, but I think that happy end, with all its attendant good results must be sought in India There are two tremendous obstacles in Africa, one, the climate, the other, the people

P S The wildest legends are circulating about town, to the effect that the Queen proposes to ask to have *The Frozen Deep* at Windsor. I have heard nothing of it otherwise, but slink about holding my breath

The horrible and demoralizing spectacle referred to by Dickens in the following extract was abolished, largely through the efforts of Miss Burdett-Coutts

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Fourteenth February. 1857

. Yesterday at the Zoological Gardens I saw (accidentally, for I had no idea of such a thing until I got into the room), the Serpents being fed with live birds, Guinea Pigs, rabbits, etc. A most horrible spectacle, and I have ever since been turning the legs of all the tables and chairs into serpents and seeing them feed upon all possible and impossible small creatures

In her efforts to promote the knowledge of what are called "Common Subjects," Miss Burdett-Coutts for many years gave prizes for papers on such subjects as "Household Work," "Needlework," "Thrift," "Dress," and "Household Management." Sometimes selections made from these essays were published in the form of a little book, and such a book, dealing with dress, was sent to Dickens, and elicited the following replies

OFFICE OF HOUSEHOLD WORDS

16 WELLINGTON STREET NORTH, STRAND

Thursday Fifth March 1857.

Now, you will presently go on to say to Mrs Brown, "what a queer man he is! what odd ideas he has sometimes!" Nevertheless, I can't help saying that I don't agree with you in

your approval of the little essays about Dress I think them not natural—overdone—full of a conventional sort of surface morality—disagreeably like one another—and, in short, just as affected as they claim to be unaffected Catherine Stanley (page 36) who finds out that the reason for not liking a little bit of finery—which almost every young person on earth does, remember—human nature is “a common thing”, and it is of no use to dream of putting it aside—Catherine, I say, who finds out that the reason for not liking it and putting it on, is, that she will be “more really admired” without it, ought to be her successor—Miss Sly I should call Catherine the only honest person of those Seven

With these exceptions—respecting which I nail my flag to the mast with a tenpenny nail at each corner—I have been greatly interested in, and pleased with, the whole book And I heartily congratulate you upon it

WATT'S HOTEL, GRAVESEND

Thursday Night Ninth April 1857

. My uneasiness on the Dress point, arose, first of all, from the nature of the girls' remarks I do not feel them to be true, and I have a very great misgiving that they were written against nature, under the impression that they would have a moral aspect. I attach no blame to the

young women—have not a doubt that they deceived themselves far more than they will ever deceive anybody else—and believe them to have written in a love of commendation, in a rather more disagreeable phase of it than a love of dress would shew.

I have also long felt the question to be an excessively difficult one. Apart from what you so gently and delightfully write in your letter (you must not mind my praising it, because it really does charm me), of that little womanly vanity and desire to please, which a wisdom in comparison with which the best of our lights are mere ignorance and folly, has implanted in woman, as one of their distinguishing marks, for the happiness of mankind, I have to add an observation which I believe to be a true one. I constantly notice a love of color and brightness, to be a portion of a generous and fine nature. I feel sure that it is often an innocent part of a capacity for enjoyment and appreciation, and general adornment of everything, which makes a buoyant, hopeful, genial character. I say most gravely that I do not know what I may take away from the good influences of a poor man's home, if I strike this natural common thing out of the girl's heart who is going to be his wife.

It is like the use of strong drinks or the use

of strong anything The evil is in the abuse, and not in the use The distinction between the two, and the perception of the medium in which taste and propriety are to be found, is the result—one of the results—of a generally good, sound, plain education. The natural tendency of the sex through all its grades, is to a little finery—and I would not run counter to that (I make bold to say), agreeable, wholesome, and useful characteristics The frivolous women of a better degree who disgust you and all sensible people, have really had no education whatever that deserves the name.

TAVISTOCK HOUSE

Twenty Second May 1857

. After the first of June, I shall be inconsolable until I have fairly laid hold of you and Mrs Brown and taken you in captivity down to Gad's Hill I want you so much to see it It is full of the ingenious devices of the inimitable writer, and I really think is as comfortable a little place as you will find out of Torquay—which place I consider to be an Impostor, a mockery, a delusion, and a snare

The two following extracts reflect but imperfectly the anxieties and complications that arose from a visit paid Dickens by Hans Andersen

LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

GAD'S HILL PLACE, HIGHAM

Third June. 1857.

... Hans Christian Andersen may perhaps be with us, but you won't mind *him*—especially as he speaks no language but his own Danish, and is suspected of not even knowing that

TAVISTOCK HOUSE,

Friday Tenth July 1857

... We are suffering a good deal from Andersen. The other day we lost him when we came up to the London Bridge Terminus, and he took a cab by himself. The cabman driving him through the new unfinished street at Clerkenwell, he thought he was driving him into remote fastnesses, to rob and murder him. He consequently arrived here, with all his money, his watch, his pocket book, and documents, *in his boots*—and it was a tremendous business to unpack him and get them off. I have arrived at the conviction that he cannot speak Danish, and the best of it is, that his Translatress declares he can't—is ready to make oath of it before any magistrate

The first paragraph of the letter of September 5th, 1857, referring to Friday being Dickens's lucky day of the week, and the one upon which

he first met Miss Burdett-Coutts, was given in the introduction to the Letters (v pages 29, 30).

Richard Wardour, over whose death thousands of people were said to have wept, was a character in the play *The Frozen Deep*, by Wilkie Collins. (v page 172) The tears of Miss Maria Ternan, so sympathetically described by Dickens, may be regarded more cynically by the present generation. She was a daughter of Frances Eleanor Ternan (née Jarman), an actress of considerable reputation, who played many parts both in London and the provinces, and in 1855 took part with her daughters Maria and Ellen Lawless Ternan, Dickens and other literary celebrities, in representations of *The Frozen Deep*. Though Maria and Ellen Ternan did a great deal of acting in amateur companies they did not finally adopt the stage as a profession. Ellen Lawless, to whom Dickens left a legacy of £1,000, married Mr George Wharton Robinson, M A, a schoolmaster, Maria married a Mr W Taylor, and afterwards went to Italy, where she was for some years the special correspondent at Rome of *The Standard*—at that time the most influential daily paper in London next to *The Times*. A third sister, Frances Eleanor, married Thomas Adolphus Trollope, an accomplished and successful writer, and the brother of Anthony Trollope. T A Trollope was a contributor to *Household Words*, and his wife, in common with her mother, Mrs Ternan, and her two sisters, were all warm friends and admirers of Dickens, particularly Ellen, who was an intimate friend of his

daughter Kate (Mrs. C. A. Collins), and of his sister-in-law, Miss Georgina Hogarth, who remained a great friend up to the time of Mrs. Robinson's death

Mr Lemon was of course Mark Lemon (1809-70), one of the founders, and the first editor, of *Punch*, the first number of which was published July 17th, 1841

GAD'S HILL PLACE

Saturday, Fifth September 1857.

. . . Mentioning Richard Wardour,—perhaps Mr Wills has not told you how much impressed I was at Manchester by the womanly tenderness of a very gentle and good little girl who acted Mary's part. She came to see the Play beforehand at the Gallery of Illustration, and when we rehearsed it, she said "I am afraid, Mr Dickens, I shall never be able to bear it, it affected me so much when I saw it, that I hope you will excuse my trembling this morning, for I am afraid of myself" At night when she came out of the cave and Wardour recognised her, I never saw anything like the distress and agitation of her face—a very good little pale face, with large black eyes,—it has a natural emotion in it (though it was turned away from the audience) which was quite a study of expression But when she had to kneel over Wardour dying and

be taken leave of the tears streamed out of her eyes into his mouth, down his beard, all over his rags—down his arms as he held her by the hair. At the same time she sobbed as if she were breaking her heart, and was quite convulsed with grief. It was of no use for the compassionate Wardour to whisper “My dear child, it will be over in two minutes—there is nothing the matter—don’t be so distressed!” She could only sob out, “O! It’s so sad, O it’s so sad!” and set Mr Lemon (the softest hearted of men) crying too. By the time the Curtain fell, we were all crying together, and then her mother and sister used to come and put her in a chair and comfort her, before taking her away to be dressed for the Farce. I told her on the last night that I was sure she had one of the most genuine and feeling hearts in the world, and I don’t think I ever saw anything more prettily simple and unaffected. Yet I remember her on the stage, a little child, and I daresay she was born in a country theatre.

Very pleasant to know, I submit to you and Mrs Brown? And if you ever see, at Kean’s or else where, Miss Maria Ternan, that is the young lady.

The statement in the following letter must not, of course, be taken too seriously, particularly the

paragraph written immediately after the terrible events of the Indian Mutiny.

GAD'S HILL PLACE

Sunday Fourth October 1857.

... I observed an extraordinary deterioration in Layard, the last time I saw him. I ventured to hint to him that I thought it came of his not leaving the noble game of Politics to the knaves and Fools and Pococuranti, until they had ruined us.

When I see people writing letters in *The Times* day after day, about this class and that class not joining the army and having no interest in arms—and when I think how we all know that we have suffered a system to go on which has blighted generous ambition, and put reward out of the common man's reach, and how our gentry have disarmed our Peasantry—I become Demoniacal

And I wish I were Commander in Chief in India. The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental race with amazement (not in the least regarding them as if they lived in the Strand, London, or at Camden Town), should be to proclaim to them in their language, that I considered my holding that appointment by the leave of God, to mean that I should do my

utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested, and that I begged them to do me the favor to observe that I was there for that purpose and no other, and was now proceeding, with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of mankind and raze it off the face of the Earth

In 1857 Dickens and Wilkie Collins made a short tour in the North of England, and out of this arose the five chapters in *Household Words* entitled "The Lazy Tour of Two Idle Apprentices" Collins's grim story is good, but Dickens's bit of "diablerie" is better, and highly ingenious, for the ghost is of a man who committed two murders for gain, and by investments multiplied his wealth twelvefold, with the result that his ghost increases in number from one to twelve with the striking of the clock!

GAD'S HILL PLACE

Sunday Fourth October 1857

Mr Collins (who never goes out with me on any expedition, without receiving some damage or other), sprained his leg on our second day out, and I had to carry him, à la Richard Wardour, in and out of all the Inns, Railway carriages etc, during the rest of the Expedition.

You will see "Our Lazy Tour" now going on in *Household Words*. It contains some descriptions (hem!) remarkable for their fanciful fidelity, and two grim stories—the first, of next Wednesday, by the cripple, the second, of next Wednesday fortnight, that is to say in the Fourth Part, by your present correspondent—a Short Story—a bit of Diablerie

The 1857 Christmas number of *Household Words* consisting of thirty-six pages, contained a story of the Caribbean Seas, where a gang of cruel pirates capture English prisoners, twenty-two women and children, all of whom are, of course, victoriously rescued. It was entitled the "Perils of Certain English Prisoners and their Treasure of Women, Children, Silver and Jewels." It consisted of three chapters, of which the first and third were written by Dickens. It is perhaps the least successful of all the Christmas stories.

OFFICE OF HOUSEHOLD WORDS

Wednesday Twenty Fifth Nov 1857

Would you and Mrs Brown like to come and dine with us at Tavistock House, either on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday at 6, to hear the Christmas No of *Household Words*. It is all one story this time, of which I have written the greater part (Mr Collins has written one chapter), and which I have planned with great

care in the hope of commemorating, without any vulgar catchpenny connexion or application, some of the best qualities of the English character that have been shewn in India I hope it is very good, and I think it will make a noise Naturally, therefore, I want you to know what it is, before anybody else does .

After the death in June, 1857, of his dear friend Douglas Jerrold, Dickens decided to organize a series of entertainments to raise a fund for the benefit of the family Two subscription performances were given in the Gallery of Illustration, Regent Street, of Wilkie Collins's *The Frozen Deep*, Dickens gave two readings of his *Christmas Carol* in St Martin's Hall, with such immense success that the idea then occurred to him of giving public readings for his own benefit Two of Jerrold's plays, *The Rent Day*, and *Black-eyed Susan*, were revived, lectures were given by Thackeray and W H Russell (the famous war correspondent of *The Times*), there was a third performance of *The Frozen Deep*, attended by the Queen and Prince Consort, followed by another in the great Free Trade Hall, Manchester, where Dickens again read his *Carol* To carry out the business arrangements of these entertainments Dickens secured the services of Mr Arthur W W Smith (1825-61), and when he began his own public readings both in London and the country he had the

assistance of this invaluable man of business, who was also devoted to Dickens personally. The death of Mr. Smith in 1861 was a great blow to the novelist, who said, "it is as if my right arm were gone."

HULL

Wednesday Twenty Seventh October. 1858.

. . My tour is now drawing to a close, and I am heartily glad to think that it is nearly over, and that I shall soon be at home in my own room again. It has been wonderfully successful. My clear profit—my own, after all deductions and expences—has been more than a Thousand Guineas a month. But the manner in which the people have everywhere delighted to express that they have a personal affection for me and the interest of tender friends in me, is (especially at this time) high and far above all other considerations. I consider it a remarkable instance of good fortune that it should have fallen out that I should, in this autumn of all others, have come face to face with so many multitudes.

Mr Arthur Smith is everything I could desire, and has made the way as smooth as possible. His extraordinary practical knowledge, and his great zeal, and his gentle way of dealing with crowds and putting people at their ease, have been of the greatest service and comfort to me.

"THE TALE OF TWO CITIES"

TAVISTOCK HOUSE, TAVISTOCK SQUARE.

Monday Thirteenth December 1858

.. The Coventry people have given me a seventy five Guinea Watch, which is chronometer, Repeater, and every other terrible machine that a watch can be It was very feelingly and pleasantly given, and I prize it highly

The novel referred to in the following extract was the *Tale of Two Cities*

TAVISTOCK HOUSE.

Monday Thirtieth January 1860

.. I am very hard-worked just now, for, finding that I could not prevent the dramatizing of my last story, I have devoted myself for a fortnight to the trying to infuse into the conventionalities of the Theatre, something not usual there in the way of Life and Truth The result will become manifest tonight I have some hopes that there is a French populace dancing the Carmagnol, which is not like the languid run of unrealities of that kind

57 GLOUCESTER PLACE, HYDE PARK GARDENS

Friday Twelfth February. 1864

On the last night of the old year I was acting charades with all the children I had

made something to carry, as the Goddess of Discord; and it came into my head as it stood against the wall while I was dressing, that it was like the dismal things that are carried at Funerals. I took a pair of scissors and cut away a quantity of black calico that was upon it, to remove this likeness. But while I was using it, I noticed that its *shadow* on the wall still had that resemblance, though the thing itself had not. And when I went to bed, it was in my bedroom, and still looked so like, that I took it to pieces before I went to sleep. All this would have been exactly the same, if poor Walter had *not* died that night. And examining my own mind closely, since I received the news, I recall that at Thackeray's funeral I had sat looking at that very object of which I was reminded. See how easily a marvellous story may be made.

APPENDIX

EXTRACT FROM THE WILL, DATED AUGUST 7TH, 1888, OF THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS

(See page 10)

"I declare that I am a member of the Church of England as now by law established Whereas I have founded and endowed churches in various parts of England, and I have endowed Bishoprics and Archdeacons in the Colonies and dependencies of the United Kingdom, now I hereby declare that if at any time hereafter the Church of England shall be disestablished or separate itself from the State the object I had in view in providing such endowments and gifts will be rendered nugatory, and I further direct that if under such circumstances the mode of dealing with endowments shall depend upon the wishes of the founder my wish is (so far as I can lawfully give such direction) that such endowments and gifts so made by me as aforesaid shall revert to, and form part of, my residuary personal estate, and I hereby expressly declare that such endowments and gifts were not made by me to any community as a spiritual body or as an independent voluntary association, but to the Protestant Church of England as now by law established under the supremacy of the Crown, being Protestant. If the Church of England shall at any time hereafter be separated from the State, as the Irish integral portion thereof has been, or shall separate itself from the State, then my

wish is and I expressly declare that any transfer or appropriation of my endowments and gifts to such Church so separated or to any new or other ecclesiastical body will be contrary to my intention as donor and founder But, without imposing any trust or obligation whatsoever on my legatees or representatives who may recover such endowments and gifts, I wish to express my hope that they will regard the feelings which prompted me to make such endowments and gifts and will, if they shall recover my said endowments and gifts, or any of them, appropriate the same or the portion so recovered to such objects as may to them seem best calculated to promote the principles of the Protestant Reformation, civil liberty, and social well-being ”

“MISS MEREDITH'S PILLOWS”

(See pages 35 and 37)

THIS phrase in Dickens's letter of December 14th, 1841, which sadly puzzled me, was kindly explained to me by Dr George C Williamson, Mount Manor House, Guildford, after the letter and my comments appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine* Dr Williamson had the advantage of knowing both Miss Burdett-Coutts and Miss Meredith, and saw them engaged in making pillows, stuffed with finely cut up bits of paper The pillows were sent to hospitals and other institutions in the East In this interesting explanation may probably also be found a solution of Lady Burdett-Coutts's frequent requests to guests staying with her for old envelopes which were about to be thrown into a waste-paper basket These requests puzzled and amused her friends They would say, “But they are only old envelopes, Baroness”, to which Lady Burdett-Coutts would reply, “I know, but

I like old envelopes " What became of envelopes thus acquired, I never knew But the requests were no doubt prompted partly by a memory of far-off things never wholly forgotten by that wonderful mind, and partly out of enjoyment of the astonishment displayed by those who received so novel a petition from a "great lady"!

THE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES DICKENS

BY SAMUEL DRUMMOND

THIS oil portrait by S Drummond was formerly in the collection of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, by whom it was valued as a good likeness of Dickens as a young man

It was probably painted about 1836 or 1837, when Dickens was about twenty-five years of age I cannot remember, if I ever knew, when it came into the possession of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, but I believe it to have been at about the time it was painted, and I am certain it was before 1880 It always hung in one of the principal reception rooms at 1 Stratton Street, and I remember that Lady Burdett-Coutts expressed to me a wish that it should be lent with other pictures to The Victorian Exhibition at the New Gallery, in 1891 There can be no doubt whatever in my mind that the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who knew Dickens as a young man, considered it a genuine and interesting portrait of the Author

I am indebted to Mr Lindsay Fleming, M A, Aldwick Grange, Bognor Regis, for the following additional interesting details regarding the picture

"The Portrait of Charles Dickens by Samuel Drummond was in the collection of the Baroness Burdett-

Coutts and was sold at the rooms of Messrs Christie, Manson & Woods on Thursday, May 4th, 1922, being Lot 20. It only realized 32 guineas, since it did not appear at that time to be generally accepted as an authentic portrait of Dickens.

"The portrait measures $29\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $24\frac{1}{2}$ inches, it shows a young man of clear complexion, prominent and shapely nose, large eyes of a brownish colour, and smallish but full-lipped mouth, with a shock of black hair. He wears a dark coat with fur collar and a black embroidered vest, a white shirt and black stock. A black ribbon hangs round his neck, and what may be an eye-glass is attached to it. A neck-chain appears hanging in front of the vest.

"Exception has been taken to the portrait on the ground of the eyes being wrongly coloured. But see the letter of Mr M H Spielmann, F S A, the eminent art critic, to *The Times* of 28 October, 1928, where it is said that the colour of Dickens's eyes changed with his moods. Apart from this portrait, different artists portrayed them as dark blue-grey, brown, blue, and they have been described as hazel, grey, black. Changes may also occur in the pigment of the eyes in an oil picture.

"The following description of Dickens, by his friend Francesco Berger, published in *The Times* of February 7th, 1928, may be cited.

"'Dickens was of middle height, of moderate bulk, and of ruddy complexion. In his dress he was anything but untidy, frequently wearing a black velvet waistcoat well calculated to show off the long gold watch chain suspended from the neck.'

"The back of the picture is inscribed

"'Chas Dickens Esq Boz painted by S Drummond Esq,
A.R.A.'"

"Samuel Drummond, born 1765, was made A R A in 1808, and died 1844.

"On the back of the frame is a newspaper cutting referring to the sale at Gad-hill Place on 9th June, 1870, of effects of Charles Dickens, conducted by Mr Homan. Inquiry of Mr Hubert F Homan, of Messrs Franklin Homan Ltd, 178, Eastgate, Rochester, elicited that the portrait was not in that sale. Nor was it in the sale of Charles Dickens's picture and works of art at Christie's, July, 1870.

"Pasted on the back of the frame is a card reading, 'The Victorian Exhibition, New Gallery Title, Charles Dickens by Drummond, lent by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts Reg No 333-8' It was No 222 in the catalogue. This exhibition was held in the years 1891-2.

"The portrait was reproduced in F G Kitton's *Charles Dickens His Life, Writings and Personality*, 1902, and is therein stated to be published through the courtesy of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, the owner.

"The late Mr B W Matz, Editor of the *Dickensian*, consulted the late Mrs Perugini, daughter of Charles Dickens. Mr Matz wrote on 29th January, 1923

"'During my visit to Mrs Perugini on Saturday, I spoke to her about the Samuel Drummond portrait, regarding which you wrote her

"'She asks me to tell you that she believes the portrait to be that of her father. She does not know if the original painting was ever in her father's possession, or if he gave it to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, but she is pleased to give you her assurance that she does not doubt its authenticity.

"'I am glad to be able to furnish this information, as it also settles a doubt that had always been in my mind.'

"The portrait passed from the Burdett-Coutts collection into the possession of Mr James Fleming, of Aldwick

APPENDIX

Grange, Bognor Regis, Sussex. Mr. Fleming loaned it from April, 1925, for two years, to the Dickens Museum, Doughty Street. It hung there over the mantelpiece in the room believed to be Dickens's study, where Dickens finished *Pickwick* and *Oliver Twist*, and wrote *Nicholas Nickleby*. Its place was taken by a careful copy made by Mr P. A. Hay, R. I., R. S. W., the gift of Mr Fleming to the Museum."

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